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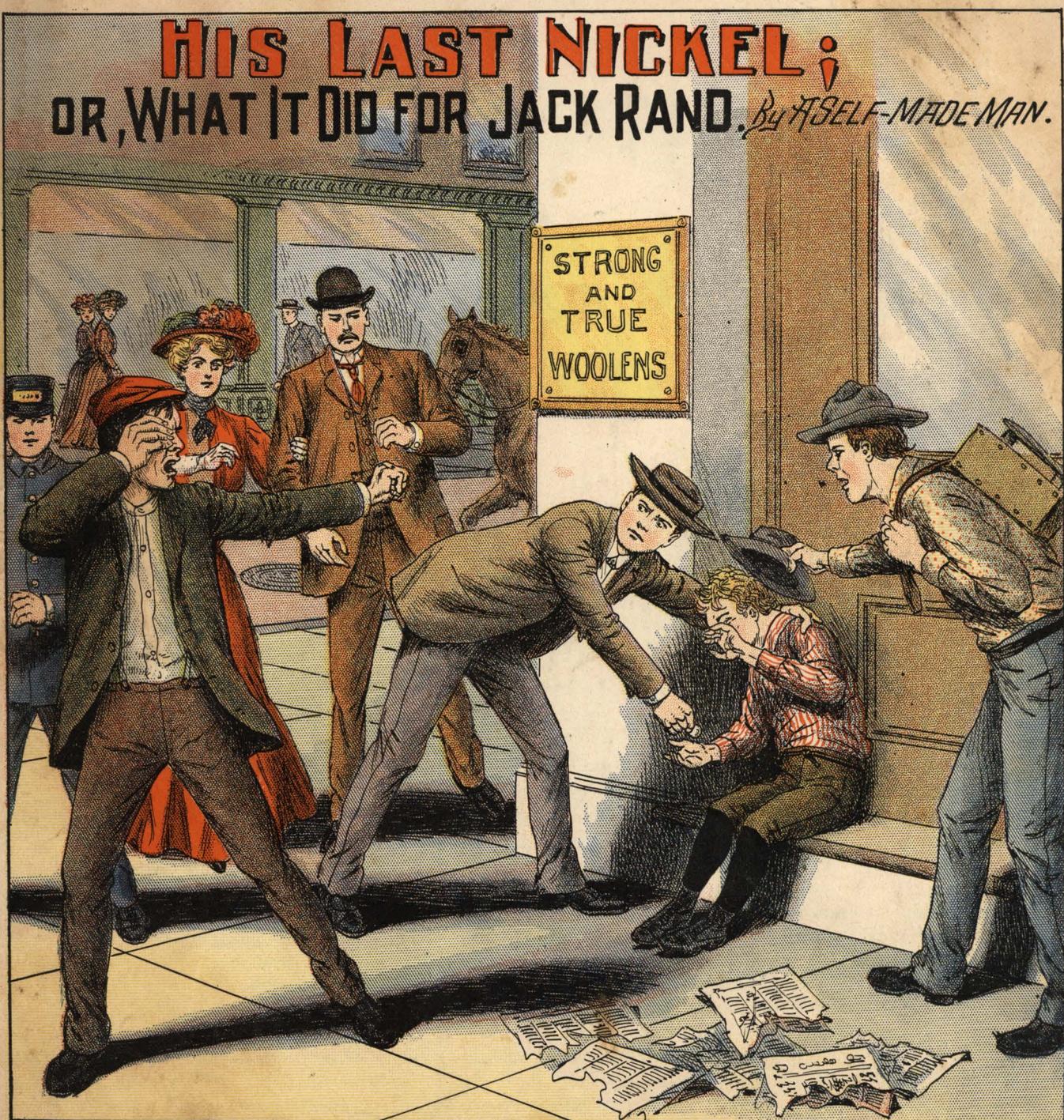
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# FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

STORIES OF  
BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY.

HIS LAST NICKEL;  
OR, WHAT IT DID FOR JACK RAND.

By A SELF-MADE MAN.



"I'll get square with you!" snarled Steve, shaking his fist at the plucky boy. Jack gave him a defiant look as he dropped a coin in the newsboy's hand. "Here's my last nickel," he said; "but you're welcome to it."

# Fame and Fortune Weekly

## STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY

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## HIS LAST NICKEL

OR,

## WHAT IT DID FOR JACK RAND

By A SELF-MADE MAN

### CHAPTER I.

#### JACK RAND AND HIS FATHER.

"Not another dollar, do you understand?" roared Major Rand, angrily, to his son Jack, a stalwart, good-looking boy of seventeen. "I consider an allowance of five dollars a week more than enough to supply all your wants."

"But, sir, Howard Edgerton's father gives him ten dollars a week spending money," protested Jack.

"I don't care what Howard Edgerton's father gives his son. He is at liberty to give him \$100 a week if he chooses. That's his business. For a boy of your years \$260 a year is amply sufficient to squander on himself. At any rate, that's all you will get from me," said the major decidedly, as he wheeled around in his chair, took up the morning paper and began to read.

Jack looked rather discontentedly at the five-dollar bill which he had just received from his father.

This was his regular weekly allowance which he had been in receipt of since his last birthday.

It ought to have been enough, as his father said, to supply his boyish wants, but for one reason or another Jack found it inadequate.

He received the money every Monday morning and before Friday he was broke.

His particular friend, Howard Edgerton, son of a prominent lawyer, having ten dollars a week to spend on himself, made Jack, in his own estimation, feel like thirty cents.

After looking at the bill for a moment or two, at the same time turning the situation over in his mind, Jack said:

"You give Florence all the money she wants, and you don't pin her down to a regular allowance."

"She's two years older than you," replied his father, without looking up from his paper. "Besides, she's a girl, and needs a lot of things. At any rate, she spends the money properly, which I doubt if you do."

"It takes two dollars of this money to pay my dues at the boat club," said the boy.

"What! Two dollars a week?"

"Yes, sir."

"Why, that's a preposterous sum! You'd better cut it out."

"All the fellows I know belong to it—that is, almost all. I wouldn't be in the swim at all if I drew out of it."

"A dollar a week at the outside ought to be enough for dues. That's fifty-two dollars a year. How many members have you in the club?"

"Fifteen."

The major made a rapid mental calculation.

"That amounts to \$780 a year. What do you do with all that money?"

"We spend it easily enough."

"I'll wager you do," replied his father, grimly.

"Then there's our secret society, 'The White Owls,' that costs another dollar a week."

"Upon my word, young man, you and your associates seem to be going the pace. How many more organizations do you belong to?" asked his father, sarcastically.

"That's all, sir."

"Maybe you're thinking of joining a new one, and want me to put up the dues?"

"No, sir."

"Well, after squandering three dollars in dues you still have a couple of dollars left. Isn't that enough for you?"

"No, sir. It isn't half enough, especially as it's vacation time. We row down to Saybrook three times a week, and Howard Edgerton, or Will Langdon, or Fred Bartling, or some other fellow, treats to lunch. That costs more than two dollars itself."

Major Rand wheeled around in his chair again and looked at his son.

"It seems to me you're running with a very extravagant set of boys," he said, in no very pleasant tone.

"Who else have I to go with in my set?"

"There are a lot of respectable boys in town you could associate with. Your schoolmates at the high school, for instance."

"They're all right, in their way, but their parents are not well enough off for them to make any kind of showing alongside of Howard Edgerton, Will Langdon, and the other fellows I travel with."

"Then drop Howard Edgerton, and the rest of his class, and make friends with the boys whose tastes are not so expensive."

"That wouldn't do at all, sir," objected Jack. "My sister and Flora Edgerton are chums. You and mother call on the Edgertons, and the Langdons, and the Bartlings, and the rest of the bunch who form the swell set here. It would look fine, wouldn't it, for me to cut loose from the fellows I'm accustomed to go with, and associate with the boys on the outside? I simply couldn't do it. You're rich. You can afford to give me ten dollars a week just as well as Howard's father. You can——"

"I don't want to hear any more on the subject, do you understand?" snapped Major Rand, wrathfully. "Five dollars is enough for you, and what's more, it's all you're going to get. If you can't make it do that isn't my fault. Now, I wish you'd go, as I don't wish to be annoyed any more this morning."

The major swung around toward the window for the second time and turned his back on his son, thereby intimating that he was out of the discussion.

Jack took the hint and walked slowly out of the library.

He was rather a proud boy, in a way, and would not get down on his knees to anybody, even his father.

He had put up the best argument he could bring forward in order to accomplish his object, which was a raise in his weekly allowance.

Had he appealed to his mother and sister he could have raised enough to have carried him over for a couple of weeks or so; but that wasn't his way of doing business.

If his father wouldn't give it to him voluntarily, he wouldn't go around begging in other quarters.

Major Wilford Rand was a graduate of West Point Military Academy, and had served in the army a matter of twenty years, chiefly in the engineer corps.

He finally left the service of Uncle Sam to accept a position as chief engineer for a company that was building a railroad in Chili.

After five years' residence in South America he returned to the United States and became chief engineer of a big political job in Pennsylvania.

He acquired considerable wealth out of his engineering

operations and finally bought a fine estate on the Connecticut shores of the Sound and retired from active work.

He had two children—Florence and John, and it is with the latter that this story deals.

Jack Rand was a fine boy, all things considered, and much more of a man than his father supposed him to be.

Jack's request for a raise in his allowance might have met with more consideration from his father had he not brought it forward at a rather unfortunate time.

The major had invested a good part of his money in a copper proposition some months previous, from which he expected large results, and it happened he had received a letter that morning from the secretary of the company which greatly disappointed from a financial standpoint, consequently he had something of a grouch on, and that was the snag Jack unwittingly ran up against.

Jack's associates were all sons of rich men who lived in the neighborhood.

Their fathers and mothers formed the aristocratic set of Beechwood, on the suburbs of the town of Fairhaven.

The boys of Jack's age attended the Fairhaven High School, their sisters of a like age went to the Fairhaven Seminary.

Some of the families had sons and daughters at the big colleges at a distance, and one of these institutions was the ultimate destination picked out for Jack and his friends.

When the major suggested that his son cut loose from his regular companions and take up with the less fortunate high school boys he did not really mean what he said.

He simply made the remark thoughtlessly, because he was for the moment angered by what he considered the extravagant expenses of the younger swell set.

At any rate, Jack had no thought of following his father's suggestion, for in his mind it was simply ridiculous.

## CHAPTER II.

JACK OVERHEARS A CONVERSATION AND GETS INTO A BAD FIX.

Jack not being aware that his father was a bit "off his perch" that morning walked out of the house under the impression that he wasn't getting a square deal.

He simply couldn't bear to be under obligations to Howard Edgerton, Will Langdon and others of his crowd who had more spending money than himself.

But now that he had failed to raise the wind he didn't see how he could hold his end up.

Instead of going over to the Point, on Lawyer Edgerton's property, where the boys met every morning at the boathouse, he walked off in the opposite direction till he came to a small patch of woods.

He wanted to be alone to think his dilemma over—possibly he might find a way to extricate himself.

He sat down on a fallen trunk among the bushes and was soon lost in thought.

After a time he was aroused by the sound of voices, and became aware that two men were approaching along the path through the wood.

When they came in sight Jack saw that each carried a heavy suit-case.

"I guess we'll take a rest somewhere around here," said one of the men. "This case of mine is plaguey heavy."

"Same here," replied the other.

They looked about them and selected a couple of stones within ear-shot of Jack.

"We made a pretty good haul at the lawyer's house last night," said the first speaker. "I tell you, Bill, these suburban residences are the finest kind of cribs to crack."

"That's what they are, Jim," replied his companion, with a grin.

"The plate I've got in this case is the real stuff—solid every ounce of it," said Jim, whose other name was Coney.

"Solomon ought to come up with a handsome price for it, then," remarked the other. "If he doesn't he don't get it, or my name isn't Bill Squires."

"You bet he won't get it. I'd sooner dump it into the East River than let him get the cream of everything we take him," answered Jim Coney.

Jack Rand listened to the foregoing bit of conversation in bewildered astonishment.

Apparently these two men were burglars, although they appeared to be quite gentlemanly looking.

But for the confession they were making he never would have suspected them of crooked propensities.

He wondered whose house it was that had been robbed during the night.

One of the men had remarked that it was a lawyer's.

There were two or three lawyers living in the Beechwood district.

Howard Edgerton's father was one; Will Langdon's father was another, and there was a third named Davenport, who was a big corporation lawyer, and lived about midway between the Sound and Fairhaven.

No doubt one of these three had suffered a serious loss in property, but up to the time Jack left home the news had not circulated as far as his house.

It immediately occurred to Jack that it was his duty to follow these rascals and if possible secure their arrest.

"We have plenty of time to catch the 10:15 local for New York," said Coney, "and when we reach the city we'll be safe."

"We're safe enough anyway," replied Squires. "We've represented ourselves as commercial travelers, and no one would suspect us to be otherwise."

"Open your case and take out that diamond pendant," said Coney. "I want to see how it looks in the daylight."

Bill Squires obligingly consented to let him see it.

"That's a swell ornament, all right," remarked Jim. "How much do you s'pose it's worth?"

"I should think it cost a couple of thousand cases, easy enough."

"We ought to have it valued if we can before we show it to Solomon. That old scoundrel would swear it wasn't worth over \$500, and give up a couple of hundred on it. Then he'd break it up and sell the diamonds to some firm in Maiden Lane he does business with on the quiet."

"I'm thinkin' it will pay us to break it up ourselves, and sell the diamonds separately to Solomon. Then we needn't be in a hurry to get rid of the plate and other stuff. There is nothin' like bein' able to take your time about such things. We could drive a much better bargain with that swindlin' old fence."

"I don't know but you're right, Bill. We ought to cut it fat for a good while on the proceeds of last night's work."

"Well, let's be goin'. The train will be along in a short time," said Squires.

They got up and were about to resume their way when Jim Coney's sharp eyes saw the top of Jack's hat through the bushes.

He dropped his suit-case with an imprecation, dashed into the underbrush, and had the boy by the arm before he realized that he had been seen.

Dragging Jack out into the path he said to his companion:

"Here's a chap that's been spyin' on us and listenin' to our talk, Bill."

"The deuce he has!" exclaimed Squires, setting down his suit-case in some consternation.

"Come, now, own up, you young monkey," hissed Coney. "You've been follerin' us."

"No, I haven't," replied Jack, stoutly.

"Then what were you doin' hidin' in them bushes?"

"I don't know that it's any of your business," replied Jack, defiantly.

"You'll find it is our business. You've been listenin' to what we said. Don't deny it, 'cause it won't do you any good. I caught you in the act."

"I'm not denying it. I did hear what you both said," answered Jack.

"Do you hear that, Bill? He admits that he's been playin' the spy."

Bill Squires looked much disturbed.

"What did you hear, boy?" he said, sharply.

"He's heard everythin'," interjected Jim Coney, taking on himself to answer the question.

"Did you hear all we said while we were sittin' on them rocks?" asked Squires.

"Yes, I did," admitted Jack.

Bill Squires drew a long breath and looked at Jack in no pleasant way.

"Then you know what we've got in them suit-cases, eh?"

"I can guess," answered the boy.

"And I suppose it was your intention to follow us and have us pinched?" said Squires.

Jack made no reply.

"Who are you, anyway? What's your name?"

The boy remained silent.

"What are we goin' to do, Bill? We can't let this chap go and blab on us," said Coney. "What will we do with him? Tie him to one of these trees?"

"First of all we'll tie up his jaw so he can't holler," said Squires. "You hold him while I attend to him."

Yanking Jack's handkerchief out of his pocket he gagged him by tying it around his mouth and securing the ends at the back of his head.

"When we came through this wood yesterday there were a couple of empty box-cars on the siding yonder. If they're there now we'll put this young feller in one of them and shut the door on him. That'll give us time to light out by the train. Now, I'll tie his arms behind his back."

Jack, however, was plucky, and objected to being further maltreated.

He suddenly wrenched himself free from Jim Coney's grasp, gave that rascal a back-hand blow in the face that staggered him, and made a break to escape.

Squires was after him like a shot.

Jack was nimble on his feet and would have eluded him, but that Coney picked up a good-sized stone and let it drive at him.

It caught Jack in the back of the head, and he didn't remember anything more for hours afterward, when he came to his senses and found himself tied hand and foot and stretched out in the interior of a freight-car which was moving along at a fair rate of speed.

### CHAPTER III.

#### JACK HAS A FREE RIDE TO NEW YORK.

It was some minutes before the bewildered boy realized where he was and what had happened to him.

Then he recollects what had taken place in the wood, and how he had been stricken down by a blow from behind.

"This is evidently the freight-car that fellow Squires spoke about putting me in to give him and his friend a chance to get away. He said it was standing on the siding beyond the wood. It might have been then, but it's moving either east or west now. While I've been unconscious it was coupled on to some train and I'm getting a free ride to some place where I don't want to go. I don't see how I can help myself, though, for I'm trussed up as bad as a pig in a poke. Not much chance of me getting free until the car reaches its journey's end and the railroad men come around to inspect the car. I wonder what time it is? I haven't the least idea how long I've been senseless. It must have been for an hour or two, at any rate."

His head felt pretty sore where the stone had raised a good-sized lump.

Jack had no idea, however, as to what it was that laid him out.

He lay still for some time listening to the rackete-rack of the car wheels on the rails, then, growing tired of inaction, he sat up and started to see whether he could release his hands from the small piece of rope with which they were secured.

While working at his bonds he wondered whether he was being carried toward New York or in the opposite direction.

Although the car door was closed tight, the interior was by no means dark, for the sunlight entered through the crack in the top of both of the side doors.

Jack was not particularly depressed by his predicament.

He regarded himself as the hero of an adventure that would make a fine story to tell his friends when he got back to Beechwood.

He was sorry that the burglars had gotten away with their booty.

It was up to the police of New York now to catch them, for of course the news of the robbery would be telegraphed to that city.

As the burglars had gone to the metropolis it was possible they might be captured.

He then began to wonder which of the three lawyers' residences had been looted.

Jack found that the job of getting his hands out of limbo was not an easy one.

He remembered how the hero of many a story book he had read managed to release himself under similar circumstances without a great deal of trouble, but the reality in his case was not very encouraging.

His bonds seemed to hold tighter than wax, which indicated that the two crooks had intended him to stay tied until released by somebody other than himself.

The car jogged along at a rate of about ten miles an hour for a couple of hours, and then its speed was reduced as the long freight train ran on a siding to get out of the way of a passenger following.

There was a wait of half an hour, which seemed endless to Jack, and then he heard the noise of an approaching train.

It rushed past a few feet away with a roaring and clattering sound, and was gone.

Then the freight moved on its course again.

Jack now began to realize that he was getting very hungry.

"It must be afternoon," he said to himself. "I left the house about nine. I was some time in the wood before the burglars came along. They rested there fully a quarter of an hour before they discovered me, and then—the trouble is, I don't know how long I was unconscious. It may have been for half an hour, or an hour, or more. Then, since I came to my senses I've been riding for a long time. I usually have my lunch at one. Judging from the hungry feeling I have I should think that it might easily be three or even four o'clock. I'd give something to know where I'm bound for, and when this car will reach its destination. Then maybe someone will come along and let me out of this fix."

Another hour passed slowly away and the train pulled into another siding to allow a local passenger to pass.

In fact, the freight remained over an hour at rest until three trains had gone by, when to Jack's great relief it went on again.

Judging from the failing light, the boy came to the conclusion that evening was drawing near.

He was now ravenously hungry, and he began to fear that he would be half-starved before he was released from his unenviable position.

Once more he tried to free his hands from the rope that encircled his wrists.

His arms were numb and weary from being held for so many hours in one position.

Finally he succeeded in loosening the rope a little, and this encouraged him to persevere.

During all this time the light faded out of the car, leaving it in darkness.

At length he managed to work one hand out of the noose, and the other easily followed it; but it seemed as if he never could bring his arms around in front.

They felt dead and useless, just as if they were paralyzed.

This sensation, however, did not last long, and as soon as he got them into motion they were soon lively enough again.

He tore the handkerchief gag from before his mouth, and this afforded him a blessed relief.

He thrust his hand into his trousers pocket, got out his penknife and quickly cut the cord that held his ankles together.

Then he stood up and walked around the empty car, feeling like a new boy.

The next thing he did was to try the sliding doors of the car in turn.

They were fastened.

He was doomed to remain a prisoner until somebody let him out.

He was so hungry now that he would have eaten anything in the shape of food, even if it had been but half-cooked and of the poorest quality.

He had never been so famished before in his life.

"This all comes because my father wouldn't raise my allowance, which he could have done just as well as not," grumbled Jack. "The folks have missed me long before this. I'll bet they are wondering what has become of me. The servants have been chasing around among the other houses trying to find some trace of me. They might just as well have saved themselves the trouble, for I'm miles away from Beechwood now. If I had something to eat I wouldn't care much whether I got back in a hurry or not. When a fellow can't get enough of pocket-money to hold his end up he might just as well be out on the world hoeing his own row. That's the way Burt Morris did in 'Adrift in a Great City,' and he got along fine. I don't see why I shouldn't be able to do as well as he did. He wasn't any older than me, and he made his way right to the top of the ladder. I'd like to see what I could do, anyway. It would be a change from what I've been used to. I'd like to stay away until school opened again, at any rate, and not let anybody I know find out where I was. Then when I turned up the folks would kill the fatted calf and the fellows would look upon me as a hero."

The idea was very captivating to Jack, and though he did not relish the extreme and unusual sensations of hunger that gnawed at his vitals, he began to feel a certain satisfaction in trying to grin and bear up against adversity just as did the hero of his favorite story, "Adrift in a Great City."

The train continued to run along for a considerable time without another stop, and Jack began to wonder if it ever was going to stop.

"Seems as if I ought to be near Boston by this time, if we're going there," he said to himself.

There is an end to everything, however, and at last the train ran into the Mott Haven freight yards in the lower part of the Bronx above the Harlem River.

The car in which Jack was a prisoner, along with many more, was shunted off on a side track and left.

The boy, however, didn't know that the car had reached its destination.

He waited and waited for it to go on again, but it didn't stir.

He heard the puffing of engines around the neighborhood and the shouting of men at intervals, and when an hour had gone by he came to the conclusion that his journey was over for the time being, at any rate.

At length he heard several men passing the car and talking together.

He sprang for the door and began shouting and kicking at it.

"Hello!" exclaimed one of the men. "There's somebody in that car."

"Sounds like a boy's voice," remarked one of the others. The door on that side was not locked in the regular way, but the hasp had been secured with a piece of wood.

Bill Squires had done that after he and his companion

had tumbled the boy into the car, so that he couldn't get out when he came to his senses.

At the time they put Jack in the freight-car they had no idea that it was going to be picked up in a short time by a freight-train bound for New York.

The man who had spoken first climbed up, released the hasp and pushed the door partly open.

Jack Rand immediately appeared in the aperture.

"So you've been stealing a ride, eh?" chuckled the man, "and somebody locked you inside."

"No, I haven't been stealing a ride," replied Jack, who resented such a supposition. "I was knocked on the head by a pair of burglars in a wood up near Fairhaven, chucked into this car and locked in. When I came to my senses I found the car in motion, and it's been on the move more or less ever since that time."

"How long have you been in that car?" asked the man, curiously.

"Ever since some time this morning."

"What's your name?"

"Jack Rand."

"Do you belong in Fairhaven?"

"In that neighborhood."

"Well, you're some distance from home now."

"Where am I? In Boston?"

"Boston! No, you're in the Mott Haven freight yards."

"Mott Haven!" exclaimed Jack, who had heard the name.

"That's in New York, isn't it?"

"Yes, in the Bronx, near the Harlem River."

"Then I haven't traveled as far as I thought I had."

"Well, jump out."

Jack sprang to the ground, mighty glad to get out of the car.

"What are you going to do?" asked the man, who saw that Jack was well dressed and did not look at all like a boy who would steal a ride on a freight-car.

"Get to a restaurant as soon as I can. Do you know where there's one handy? I haven't had a mouthful to eat since I had my breakfast at eight o'clock, and I'm hungry enough to eat two meals at once."

"Come along with us. We're going to our supper. There's a small restaurant two blocks from here."

"I'll go," replied Jack, eagerly.

"You say a couple of burglars knocked you on the head and locked you in that car?" said the man.

"That's right," answered Jack.

"How do you know they were burglars?"

"I heard them talking about having robbed a house up our way last night, and they had a pair of suit-cases filled with plunder."

"They caught you watching them, I suppose, and did you up to prevent you from giving them away to the police; is that it?"

"That's about the size of it."

"I suppose you'll take a train back home after supper. You can get one at the Mott Haven station by and by."

"I ain't sure whether I'll go home right away or not."

"No? Want to see some of the sights now that you're in New York?"

"I haven't decided just what I'm going to do. Is there a cheap hotel around this neighborhood? I don't care about going back till morning, at any rate."

"Yes, there's a house not far from the restaurant where you can get a room for the night for half a dollar."

"That will suit me first rate."

In a few minutes they entered the cheap restaurant where the three men were in the habit of taking their meals, and Jack sat down at the table with them.

Four plates of pea soup were soon set before them, and the way Jack piled into his share made the men grin.

Although the servants in his home would have been inclined to turn up their nose at the meal Jack put under his vest that night, the boy thought he had never tasted anything half so delicious before.

It was after ten o'clock when Jack and his new acquaintances left the restaurant.

They piloted him to the cheap "hotel," much frequented by railroad men who had no homes, and the boy hired a room for the night, paying fifty cents in advance, which came out of his \$5 bill.

Fifteen minutes later he was sound asleep, although the bed was hard and the room not to be compared with that occupied by the lowest servant in his father's house.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### JACK PICKS UP AN ENTERTAINING COMPANION.

When Jack woke up next morning his first feeling was that of surprise on beholding his strange and not very aristocratic surroundings.

He had taken no particular note of the appearance of the room the night before except to notice that it was very small.

His own chamber at home would make four such rooms.

As to the furniture, the least said about it the better.

The bed was a single one that moved with a squeak every time Jack altered his position.

There was one plain wooden chair, a small table with nothing on it, an iron washstand that held a metal pitcher and bowl, and a small yellow slop-pail with a cover underneath.

On the wall there were a couple of cheap framed chromos, representing country landscapes, a match-safe full of matches, and a wire frame for holding soap in one compartment and a comb and brush in the other.

Both the comb and the brush were attached to thin chains riveted to the wall so that they wouldn't run away, Jack thought.

On the floor was a rug that looked as if it had been manufactured in Noah's time, and had been subjected to hard times ever since.

The only cheerful thing about the room was the sunshine which came in at the window.

"This is a fine hotel—I don't think," chuckled Jack, after taking in his surroundings. "However, I slept like a top and haven't any kick coming."

On this occasion he noticed the poor quality of the food served.

The steak was tough, the potatoes greasy and the coffee muddy—a great difference to what he was accustomed to at home.

"Oh, well, if I'm going to rough it for awhile in New York I might as well get used to things first as last," he said, philosophically. "I wonder what the folks think about

me not showing up since yesterday morning? I'll bet father is in a great stew, and mother and sis—"

He paused suddenly and looked out of the restaurant window into the street.

For the first time it occurred to him that his family would be greatly worried over his strange disappearance, and that it was wrong for him to let them remain in that state.

"I know what I'll do. I send mother word that I'm in New York, and will be back after a time. That will fix things up. I'll write to Howard Edgerton, too, and tell him I'm on the track of the two burglars who robbed the lawyer's house in Beechwood. That will make him and the rest of the fellows wish they were with me. I'll make the letter strong. Tell them what the rascals did to me in the wood, and all about the free ride I had in the freight-car against my will. I'll tell them this is only the beginning of my adventures. That I expect to go through enough to make a first-class story. The fellows will be just green with envy, and I'll have the bulge on them all when I get back home."

So when Jack finished his breakfast he went back to the "hotel," got several sheets of writing paper, two envelopes and two stamps.

He told his mother that he was all right, and had concluded to stay away from home for awhile, as his father wouldn't give him enough pocket-money to hold his end up with his more fortunate associates, and he didn't care to look small in their company.

He told her not to worry about him, as he intended to make his own way in New York, and that he didn't ask any odds of any one.

The letter to Howard Edgerton was a lengthy one, and detailed the whole of his adventures since he left his father's library the previous morning.

He concluded by saying that Howard could take it over to his house and show it to his mother and sister, and wound up by remarking that he didn't know when he would be home, as he had lost track of the burglars and couldn't tell when he was likely to meet them again.

Jack had no intention of looking for the two crooks in New York.

He was no such fool as to imagine he was detective enough to hunt them down.

Besides, the police would attend to them as soon as they got notice to look them up.

He simply wished to give his friend Howard and the rest of the boys the idea that the sole reason he was staying away was because he expected to catch the rascals and return the stolen property.

He mailed the two letters at a corner mail-box and then took an elevated train downtown to see what New York looked like.

His letters created a small sensation in his family and among the boys of his acquaintance.

Major Rand immediately started for New York to find and bring him home.

In the meantime Jack spent the most of his first day in New York looking around town and taking in the sights.

As the afternoon wore away he began to think about a lodging for the night.

As his capital only amounted to \$3.50 now, he knew that

he could hardly afford to patronize a hotel, so as the hero of a certain story he had lately read had begun by hunting up a cheap lodging for himself, Jack decided to follow his example.

While sitting on a bench down at the Battery he got into conversation with a fairly well dressed young man of twenty who seemed to be taking the world pretty easy.

After awhile he asked his new acquaintance if he could direct him to a respectable lodging-house somewhere in the city.

"Nothing easier. If you're not in a hurry I'll take you up to where I stop."

Jack thanked him and said he'd go with him when he got ready.

The young man wasn't ready for awhile, though he did not appear to have any particular reason for warming the seat in the little park.

He was a fluent and fascinating talker, and Jack, in his inexperience with strangers, thought him one of the most entertaining chaps he had ever met.

Finally when the shades of the late June day began to fall upon the city, the young man, who said his name was Curtis Jett, told Jack that he was ready to start.

"It's some distance uptown," he said, "so we'd better take the L."

Jack had no objection to taking any kind of a conveyance that would land them near their destination.

At the pay window Jett discovered that he must have left his pocketbook home, so Jack bought two tickets, which cost him a dime.

They got out at the Thirty-third Street station, and Curtis Jett suggested that they have dinner at a Sixth Avenue restaurant before going to his lodgings.

"I'll have to borrow the price of you, Rand," he said, in an off-hand way, "but I'll make it all right with you when we get over to the house."

"That's all right," replied Jack, who was perfectly willing to ante up.

"How much can you stand?" asked Jett, as they walked down the block. "Shall we patronize a first-class restaurant or a medium-priced one? I usually dine at Martin's, or Burns', or some such place as that, but if you're not flush we'll go to a cheaper one."

Jack asked what it cost to dine at the places Jett said he was accustomed to.

When his new acquaintance gave him a general idea he said that he could not afford the luxury, so Jett took to one of the ordinary restaurants, where thirty cents would pay for a fairly substantial meal.

Although Curtis Jett said that he wasn't used to dining at common places, he made away with the viands set before him with all the voraciousness of a hungry man accustomed to pot luck.

"Being a stranger to New York," said Jett, after they left the restaurant, "I suppose you never heard of the Tenderloin?"

"Oh, yes, I've heard of it," replied Jack.

"Then maybe you know that it's the finest place in the city for having a bang-up time?"

"I've been told that it's pretty lively at night."

"You can gamble on it that it is. Nothing slow about the Tenderloin. I've traveled about it for the last ten years

and I ought to know something about it. We're in the Tenderloin now, but it's hardly awake yet. It will be an hour or two yet before things begin to pick up. It's half-past seven now. I would propose that we take in a show before going over to my lodgings."

"It would be rather late when we got out, wouldn't it? Too late for me to make any arrangements about a room."

"Don't you worry about that. You shall share my room to-night, and you can make your arrangements in the morning."

Jack said that he didn't like to inconvenience Mr. Jett to that extent, but his new acquaintance declared that it would be no inconvenience at all.

"I owe you a favor anyway for advancing me the little money you have until I can repay you at the house. Don't say another word, but let's go to a show."

Jett said they'd better take in one of the Broadway theaters near by, and so they went to the Bijou, Jack paying for the tickets.

After the show Jett asked him if he played billiards or pool.

Jack said that he didn't indulge in those amusements.

"Do you drink or smoke?" asked Jett.

"No."

"Well, I don't blame you. They are bad habits. I have to take a snifter myself once in awhile, as my constitution is weak."

Jack thought he didn't look very strong for a young man of his years.

"I suppose you don't mind loaning me the price of a drink," said Jett. "I don't usually stay out as late as this on account of my health, and when I do I feel the necessity of a bracer. What do you say? Shall we go in here? You can take a soda to keep me in countenance."

Jack objected to entering the saloon and said so.

"We won't be a minute," replied Jett, persuasively.

Finding that his companion was desirous of getting the drink solely on account of his health, Jack reluctantly yielded and went in with him.

The place was on the corner of Sixth Avenue and a side street, and had an entrance on both streets.

Jack handed Jett a dime and declined to drink anything at all himself.

Jett ordered the drink like one accustomed to calling for liquid refreshments.

His particular "poison," as he facetiously termed it, was a well-known brand of whiskey, and the barkeeper handed him a small glass and the bottle to help himself.

While his companion was imbibing the boy glanced around the room.

There were several customers in the place, two of whom were seated at a small table at the far end of the room with their backs to Jack.

Jett looked around the saloon also and noted the two men in question.

"I'll introduce you to a couple of friends of mine," said Jett, taking Jack by the arm and leading him down the room.

The boy followed him because he couldn't well help himself.

"Hello, sports!" said Jett, slapping one of the men on the shoulder in a familiar way, "when did you get back

from the country? Let me introduce a new friend of mine —Jack Rand. Jack, this is William Squires, an old college chum, and this is—”

He got no further, for Squires and his companion started up with an imprecation and glared at the boy.

Jack himself stared at them with astonishment, for he recognized them as the two crooks he had met in the wood, and who had treated him in such a rough way.

## CHAPTER V.

### JACK'S NIGHT IN THE TENDERLOIN.

Curtis Jett was thunderstruck at the effect produced on his friends by his introduction of Jack Rand.

Before he could recover his customary fluency of speech, Bill Squires grabbed Jack by the arm and with an exclamation more expressive than polite demanded to know what he was doing in New York.

Jim Coney, who was also on his feet, turned to Jett and asked him where he had picked the boy up.

“Why, do you chaps know him?” asked Jett.

“Do we know him!” snarled Coney. “Yes, we know him and what's worse he knows us. He mustn't get away till we've fixed matters somehow. Hustle him into the back room, Bill. Something has got to be done, and done quick, too.”

Squires, who was alive to the situation, covered Jack's mouth with his hand and pushed the struggling boy into a small back room, where they were followed by Coney and Curtis Jett.

“Say, chappies,” said Jett, “I don't quite understand this matter. You seem to know the boy, and yet he's a stranger in the city.”

“We didn't meet him in the city,” growled Squires, maintaining his hold on Jack, whom he had pushed into a chair and threatened with his eye. “We ran across him yesterday mornin' in a wood near Fairhaven, Connecticut. He was spyin' on Jim and me, and we fixed him for the time bein'. I'd like to know if he came to New York to help the police identify us, because if he did—well, it wouldn't be good for him! Where did you meet him?”

“Down at the Battery. He told me he was a stranger here, and wanted me to tell him where he could rent a room for himself.”

“Look here, young man,” said Squires, taking his hand away from Jack's mouth, “I want to know what brought you to the city?”

“That freight-car you locked me in,” replied Jack, defiantly.

Squires looked at Coney and muttered something under his breath.

“How do you know we locked you in a freight-car?” said Squires.

“It wasn't anybody else. One of you knocked me out with a crack on the head. When I came to my senses I found myself bound and gagged in the car, and the car moving along the railroad. When the car reached Mott Haven I was let out by some railroad men.”

“What brought you into this saloon?”

“Mr. Jett brought me in, and he'll tell you I didn't want to come in.”

“That's right,” nodded Jett. “He hung back, but I got him to come. He treated me to dinner and a show, and I was taking him over to where I stop when I fetched him in here.”

Squires and Coney began to understand that their meeting with Jack was wholly a matter of accident, but it was none the less serious for them, just the same.

“Keep your eye on him, Jim,” said Squires, as he took Curtis Jett by the arm and led him outside.

They were absent from the room about five minutes.

Then Jett came to the door and said:

“Let him go, Coney; I'm going to take him over to my room.”

Coney stepped aside so Jack could walk out of the saloon.

The boy accompanied the dapper-looking young man as far as the sidewalk, and then he said he guessed he wouldn't go any further with him.

“Won't go any further? Why, you're going to my room to spend the night.”

“I was going, but I've changed my mind.”

“Changed your mind?”

“Yes.”

“Why?” replied Jett, looking disappointed.

“I don't think I care to have anything more to do with you. I thought you were all right, but since those two burglars are friends of yours, that lets me out.”

“What are you talking about? Squires and Coney aren't burglars.”

“Aren't they? I'd hate to bet any money on their honesty,” and Jack started to walk off.

“Hold on. Where are you going?”

“I'm going to hunt up a place to sleep.”

“Come with me and it won't cost you a cent.”

“No; I've had all I want of your society,” replied Jack.

“Well, come over to the house so that I can pay you what I owe you.”

“You're welcome to what you owe me. I'd rather do without it than go with you to your house.”

Jack saw a policeman coming up the block and he walked rapidly toward him.

Curtis Jett also saw the approaching officer, and for good and sufficient reasons he turned on his heel and walked quickly in the opposite direction.

Jack stopped the officer and told him what had happened to him in the saloon, and who the men were who had handled him so roughly.

The policeman advised him to go to the West Thirtieth Street station and report the facts to the man at the desk.

Jack was about to tell the officer that he was a stranger in New York and didn't know where the station in question was when an uproar in a saloon across the street attracted the policeman's attention, and he started over to see what the trouble was about.

It was now after midnight, and Jack felt that he was pretty well adrift in a great city himself.

He had scarcely more than a dollar left of his funds and didn't know where to go to find a lodging for the night.

He was beginning to think that he had been a bit foolish in not taking a train for home that morning instead of

“So that's the way you got here? When did you arrive?”

“Last night.”

“Why didn't you take a train and go back home?”

“Because I didn't feel like it.”

starting out to make a hero of himself in New York, where he hadn't a friend to help him in case of necessity.

He walked slowly up the street wondering what he should do.

Glancing down the next street he came to he saw a red illuminated sign with the words, "Lodgings for single men —25 cents."

He was weary after his day's exertions in the sight-seeing line, and longed for anything in the shape of a bed.

The sign suggested what he was after, and he walked down to the doorway over which the sign hung and looked up the lighted staircase.

He was rather doubtful as to what kind of a lodging-house this was which offered a room, as he supposed, for a quarter.

The urgent need of a night's rest decided him to apply for accommodations at the place, as he had no desire to tramp the streets all night, so he mounted the stairs.

He found himself in a small corridor facing a screened desk with a pay window.

Behind the screen sat a young man dozing in a chair.

The night clerk woke up when he came up to the window.

"Want a bed?" he asked.

"Yes," replied Jack.

"Twenty-five cents, please."

Jack produced his last dollar bill and received back the change.

The clerk then came out of his den and led Jack up to the next floor.

He opened a door and introduced the boy into a good-sized room.

It was filled with unpainted board partitions about six feet high, arranged like a lot of stalls opening off of a central corridor.

Each one was provided with a cot, on which was a straw mattress, a pillow, a sheet and a blanket; some hooks screwed in the wall to hang clothes on, and a door which could be bolted on the inside.

Three-quarters of the doors were closed, and from the sounds which agitated the atmosphere of the room they appeared to be occupied by sleeping lodgers.

The clerk pushed open a door that stood ajar and told Jack that was his quarters for the night.

"In the morning you'll find the wash-room yonder," said the clerk with a sweep of his arm, and having done all that he felt called on to do he walked off, leaving the heir of the Rand family to turn in as soon as he pleased.

"The room I had last night was bad enough, but it was a palatial apartment alongside of this den," thought Jack, as he viewed his contracted accommodations.

He was too tired and sleepy to feel like quarreling with his surroundings, so after bolting his door, he removed his clothes and popped into bed.

In five minutes he was sleeping as soundly as he had ever done at home.

## CHAPTER VI.

### HIS LAST NICKEL.

He was aroused at eight o'clock next morning by someone pounding on his door.

"Hello! What's the matter?" he asked, sitting up in bed.

"Get up! Eight o'clock is the limit," replied a fog-horn voice.

"All right. I'll be out in three minutes."

As soon as he walked out of his stall he hunted up the wash-room to make his toilet.

He found that it was a small room opening off the large one.

The greater part of one side was occupied by a trough lined with a dozen faucets.

Here was where the lodgers washed.

At one end of the room was a case fitted with a beveled glass mirror and screwed against the wall.

An endless towel, which had probably been clean an hour or so before, hung over a roller, while a comb and a brush hung at the ends of long steel chains.

The condition of the towel indicated that most of the lodgers had already used it that morning, and Jack had no inclination to touch his face with it.

He dried his face with his handkerchief, and gingerly used the towel for his hands.

Then he combed his hair and was ready to leave the building.

"If this isn't roughing it, I don't know what is. Well, I guess I can stand it as long as the next one, even if I ain't used to it. It will take more than this to make me weaken, bet your life! I'd make a pretty poor hero for a book if I threw up my hands at a little hard luck. I guess I'll go and have breakfast now, and then look around to see what I can do to earn a little money. I can't afford to waste any more of my valuable time looking at skyscrapers, and the other curiosities of New York. It will be time enough to take in some more of the sights when Sunday comes around again."

Thus thinking, he made his way to Sixth Avenue and soon found a cheap restaurant, where he got a steak, rolls and a cup of coffee for twenty cents.

While eating he looked over the "Help Wanted" column of a morning daily, and picked out a dozen advertisements referring to places, any one of which he thought would suit him if he could catch on.

The addresses were all downtown, most of them on streets with the location of which he was unacquainted.

That fact did not discourage him, however.

Jack spent the whole morning hunting for half a dozen places and interviewing the different bosses, but with no result, for in every case the position had been filled long before.

After lunch he visited two other places, and finally came to the conclusion that if he expected to get a job he would have to get around early in the morning.

He was standing at the corner of Worth Street and Broadway when this fact impressed itself on his mind, and he put his hand in his pocket to figure up his small resources.

All the money he brought to light was a nickel.

He went through all his pockets hunting for the balance of his change, but he couldn't find it.

In some unaccountable way he had lost the few pieces of silver he had received from the cashier at the lunch counter he had patronized, and every bit of capital he had left in the world was a solitary nickel.

"Just one measly little nickel," he said to himself, as

he gazed at it ruefully. "I'm down to hardpan for fair. What am I going to do now? If something doesn't turn up I'll go without dinner to-night and have to sleep in some park for the lack of the price of a bed. Shall I telegraph home C. O. D. for money to return and throw up my hands? I could easily go to a hotel, explain the circumstances and stay there till I heard from father. No, I should feel ashamed of myself if I gave in under the first real stroke of hard luck. I'd be a failure as a hero. Anybody can get along when he's backed up by his folks. I want to get along by my own exertions, if only to convince myself that I can do it."

At that moment Jack heard a disturbance behind him and looked around.

A tough-looking boy, somewhat stouter than himself, had a small youth of about ten years by the ear, and was cuffing him about.

The little lad was evidently a newsboy, for he had a bundle of papers under his arm.

"Leave me alone, Steve Cox!" he remonstrated with all the vigor he was able to bring to his aid.

"Hand over that nickel yer owe me, den," demanded Steve Cox.

"I don't owe you any nickel."

"Yer a liar, Billy Barlow! If yer don't cough up I'll knock de stuffin' out of yer," giving his victim's ear a cruel twist.

"Oh! oh! you hurt! You're tearing my ear off!" cried the little fellow, beginning to cry from pain.

"Den spit out dat nickel, or I'll give yer another!"

"Aw, let up on him, Steve!" chipped in a bootblack, fully as big as the aggressor.

"Shut up yer trap!" snarled Steve, with a menacing look at the bootblack.

"Please let me go, Steve," pleaded Billy Barlow. "I haven't any money."

"Oh, yer haven't, eh? Pull out yer pockets and let me see whether ye're lyin' or not."

Billy turned all his pockets out.

A solitary penny dropped out of one.

Steve swooped after it, like an eagle after a barnyard fowl, grabbed it and put it in his pocket.

"Is dat all yer have?" he roared at Billy, still holding on to him.

"Yes," whimpered Billy.

The bully gave the lad's ear another twist, that made him cry out with pain, then he snatched away his bundle of afternoon newspapers, tore them in half and threw them into the boy's face.

"Now yer kin git! Next time I meet yer and yer don't pay dat nickel, I'll fix yer wuss, see if I don't!"

He was turning away with a look of fiendish satisfaction on his tough-looking countenance, when a hand was laid on his shoulder, and a resolute voice said:

"You big coward! What do you mean by abusing a little fellow, half your size, and tearing up his papers?"

Steve Cox turned around and came face to face with Jack Rand, whose clear hazel eyes blazed with anger.

Jack had been an observer of the scene until Steve Cox twisted Billy's ear for the last time and tore up his papers, and then his indignation asserted itself.

"Wot's de matter wit' youse?" retorted Steve, looking contemptuously at the well-dressed boy.

"The matter is that you've got to pay for those papers you destroyed."

"Who says dat I've got to pay for dem?" sneered Steve.

"I say so," replied Jack, determinedly.

"Oh, yer does?" replied Steve, sarcastically. "I s'pose yer t'ink yer kin make me pay for dem?"

"You'll pay for them, all right."

"I will, hey? Do yer want a bust in de snoot?" asked the bully, doubling up his fists. "Yer've got a nerve buttin' in where yer ain't wanted! I've a good mind ter—"

"Well," said Jack, looking him squarely in the eye, "you've a good mind to do what?"

"Smash yer!" roared Steve, raising his right arm menacingly.

"Are you going to pay for those papers?" asked Jack.

"No, I'm not goin' to pay for dem papers. What yer take me for—a stiff?"

"You'll pay for those papers or I'll hand you over to a policeman," said Jack, seizing the tough by the collar of his jacket, while the bootblack looked on amazed at the young stranger's sand.

With a howl of anger Steve wrenched himself free and struck out at Jack.

The blow was cleverly warded off, and the next moment Jack's hard fist came in contact with Steve's eye.

The young aristocrat never did things by halves.

The moment he saw that a scrap was inevitable he determined to go in for all he was worth and bring it to a quick conclusion.

He was an expert sparrer, having taken lessons from a noted professor who came to Beechwood to instruct the sons of the residents in the manly art of self-defence.

Of all the boys of his set he had proved himself the superior of the bunch, and even Howard Edgerton, who was clever with the gloves, and stronger than Jack, never entered into a friendly bout with him without using all his caution.

Steve Cox was a tough customer in his way, and was capable of making a good fight, but he had no science, and relied wholly on his strength and viciousness.

As a consequence, he was no match for Jack, who gave him not a moment to recover from the effect of the jab in the eye.

Biff! Swat! Smash!

Jack landed on his face three times in such quick succession that Steve was dazed, and threw his arms about like a windmill. In the scuffle that followed Jack's clothes were torn.

The last blow caught Steve on the point of the jaw, and he went down on the pavement all in a heap.

"Want any more?" demanded Jack, standing over him aggressively.

Steve glared up at him, utterly disorganized.

Never in all the scraps he had been in had he been laid out in such a strenuous way, and so rapidly.

He didn't even have a look-in, and that fact paralyzed him.

He hadn't considered his antagonist in his class, and expected an easy victory, and now the boot was on the other leg.

"Yah!" he snarled, rubbing his damaged optic, which hurt him badly, for Jack's first blow had been a corker, as he intended that it should be.

Steve showed that he had had enough, as he made no haste to get up.

Jack was satisfied, and leaving him on the ground walked over to Billy Barlow, who was sitting on the doorstep of the wholesale house that occupied the corner.

Billy and the bootblack had watched the brief scrap with eyes that dilated with wonder.

Jack's prowess had greatly impressed them, while Steve Cox's ability as a fighter had taken a slump in their estimation.

"How much did those papers cost you?" asked Jack.

"Five cents," replied Billy, with a sniffle, as he looked at his ruined property.

The bully rose to his feet, his ill-looking countenance distorted with fury.

A young lady, with a gentleman escort, and an A. D. T. messenger, had also been witnesses of his humiliation, and that riled him also.

"I'll git square wit' yer!" snarled Steve, shaking his fist at the plucky boy.

Jack gave him a defiant look as he dropped a coin in the newsboy's hand.

"Here's my last nickel," he said; "but you're welcome to it."

## CHAPTER VII.

### JACK SECURES A SITUATION.

The lady and gentleman heard Jack's remark, and they looked at him in surprise.

The tone of voice in which he had spoken impressed them with its sincerity.

Although the sleeve of his jacket had been torn by a nail he had run against a short time before, he did not at all look like a boy whose finances were at such a low ebb as his words indicated.

The bootblack also regarded him with some curiosity, as though he didn't take much stock in Jack's assertion that the coin he had handed Billy Barlow was actually his last nickel.

Billy dried his tears and thanked Jack for the coin.

The gentleman, to whom the lady had spoken a few words in an earnest tone, stepped up to Jack and said:

"You're a plucky lad, and evidently have a generous nature. May I ask your name?"

"Certainly, sir. My name is Jack Rand."

"The remark you made when you handed this little fellow a coin to replace his torn papers attracted the attention of my sister and myself. Are we to understand that is really your last nickel? Haven't you any more money?"

"It is really my last cent, sir. I'm flat broke."

"But you don't look as if you stood in need of charity," continued the gentleman. "Surely you have parents with whom you live, and friends."

"I'm not looking for charity," replied Jack, with some dignity, not noticing the rest of the gentleman's remark; "what I'm looking for is a situation."

"If that is what you stand most in need of I guess I can provide you with one," said the gentleman.

"Can you, sir?" asked Jack, eagerly.

"Yes. I have rather taken a fancy to you, and so has my sister," said the gentleman, nodding at the lady, who had also stepped up. "My name is Kenneth Ridge. I am a lawyer, with offices at No. — Nassau Street, near Wall. I need a smart young clerk. If you would like to accept the position it is yours."

"Thank you, sir. I accept it thankfully."

"Very well. We're on the way to my office now, so you had better accompany us. If there is one thing I admire it is pluck, backed up by good breeding. I can easily see that you come from good stock. Are your parents dead?"

"No, sir."

"Oh, I thought you were dependent on yourself."

"I am at present, sir. My people live out of town. I came here to make my own way, and I propose to do it."

"Ah, I see. You're from some country town. You have come to New York to better yourself."

"Yes, sir; I came here to better myself. I arrived the other night on a freight-car with a \$5 bill in my pocket and—"

"Is it possible that was all the money you had to begin life on in this city?" asked the lawyer, in surprise.

"Yes, sir, and now it's all gone. That was my last nickel I handed the boy."

"Where are you stopping?"

"Nowhere. I slept last night in a lodging-house in some street off Sixth Avenue. To-night it looks as if I'll have to try a bench in the park, unless—"

"Nonsense!" exclaimed the lady. "You shall come home with us. We have a spare room that you can occupy to-night, and to-morrow my brother will advance you some money so that you can secure quarters for yourself. You have no objection, Kenneth?"

"Certainly not, Agnes. He shall dine and sleep at our home to-night. That is satisfactory to you, isn't it, Jack?"

"I'm afraid, sir, it is imposing on your kindness."

"Not at all. We shall be glad to have you. Of course we wouldn't make this offer to any boy promiscuously, but you appear to be a little gentleman, and we have no doubt you are accustomed to a good home where you came from."

"Yes, sir. I have a good home; but it's no use to me at present."

"I understand. You are not yet acquainted with the city, I suppose?"

"No, sir. I know this street we're walking on is Broadway. And I know yonder is City Hall Park, and that big building at the further end of it is the post-office. I also know where Battery Park is. I have been on Wall, Broad, Pearl, and other streets in that direction. That's about all I know about the city, except I could tell you where the Tenderloin is."

The lady and the gentleman exchanged glances.

"How came you to get acquainted with the Tenderloin, Jack?" asked Mr. Ridge.

Jack told him how he had gotten acquainted with a young man named Curtis Jett in Battery Park on the previous afternoon, and how he had spent a large part of his funds on that young man under the impression that he was to have it returned to him when he reached Mr. Jett's lodging-house, where he had expected to make arrangements to stay himself.

"I'm afraid Curtis Jett is what is popularly known as a beat," said the lawyer.

"I'm afraid he's worse than that," replied Jack, recalling Jett's acquaintance with Bill Squires and Jim Coney, burglars.

"I don't wonder that he introduced you to the Tenderloin," said Mr. Ridge. "I should imagine that that was his particular stamping-grounds."

They were now crossing City Hall Park in order to reach the head of Nassau Street.

"I suppose you know that this building," said the lawyer, pointing to a flat-looking two-story edifice, painted white, and squatting like a brooding hen in the midst of the park, "is the 'City Hall'?"

"Yes, sir," replied Jack. "I was told that it is quite an old building."

"Yes, it is. It was built a great many years ago. That block facing us is called Newspaper Row. That tall structure adjoining the Brooklyn Bridge entrance is the Pulitzer Building, the home of the 'World' newspaper. That small red building across that narrow street is the 'Sun' office. That tall building yonder, with the clock, is the 'Tribune' Building, and the skyscraper at the head of Nassau Street is the American Tract Society Building. I call your attention to these facts because I have clients in all these buildings and you will probably be sent on errands to them. You will also have to visit the Hall of Records, which is yonder. The street on this side of the post-office is Park Row, and extends up past the bridge entrance for several blocks to Chatham Square. That wide street on our left is Centre Street. Make a note of it, as the Criminal and other courts are located on it up a few blocks, and you will often have to go there when I am engaged on some case."

"I'll remember all you've said, sir," replied Jack, respectfully.

"Now we'll cross over to Nassau Street," said Mr. Ridge. They walked down Nassau almost to Wall Street before they reached the building where Mr. Ridge's office was located, on the eighth floor.

They entered an outer or reception-room, the only occupant of which was a small, red-headed youth, who acted as office-boy.

The middle room was furnished with three desks.

A young man of thirty was seated at one busily engaged with a number of legal documents.

There was no one at the second desk, while at the third was a very pretty little girl working the keys of a typewriter with surprising speed.

A large alcove room off this apartment was used by Mr. Ridge as his private office.

It was lined with book-cases filled with law books.

The three entered that room.

When Mr. Ridge seated himself at his desk he proceeded to ask Jack a lot of questions about his education and one thing or another, all of which the boy answered truthfully.

The lawyer appeared to be quite satisfied with his statements, and told him what wages he would receive.

Then he called his chief clerk inside and introduced the boy to him.

"Jack will start in to-morrow morning," said Mr. Ridge to his clerk. He will use the desk formerly occupied by

Remsen, and I expect you to break him into his duties as soon as possible. I am sure you will find him smart and apt."

"I will look after him, sir," said the clerk, whose name was Arthur Evans.

The lawyer then asked his assistant about sundry matters that occupied his attention in the courts, after which he read several letters that lay on his desk.

He called his stenographer in and dictated replies to her, and after attending to other matters requiring his attention he turned to his sister and said that they would now go uptown.

With Jack in their company they took an elevated train to the Eighty-first Street station, where they got out and walked to a private house on Eighty-second Street.

Jack was shown to a room on the third floor and told to make himself at home for the present.

"By the way, I forgot to ask you, Jack, where you had left your trunk. At the depot?"

"No, sir. The fact of the matter is, I came away from home in such a sudden manner that I did not bring anything with me."

The answer very much astonished the lawyer, who for the first time began to wonder if all was right with the boy he and his sister had taken such a great fancy to.

"Do you object telling me the cause of your sudden departure from your home?" he said.

"No, sir. I will tell you all about it. I have nothing to conceal."

"I am glad to hear it," replied the lawyer, feeling much relieved.

Jack, without going into any details concerning his family, told Mr. Ridge about his encounter with the burglars in the wood near his home, and how they had served him.

He recounted his involuntary trip to Mott Haven in the freight-car, and how he had occupied his time during the couple of days he had been in the city.

"Upon my word, Jack, you had quite an adventure. You sent word to your parents, I suppose, so that they would not be worried over your unexpected disappearance?"

"I wrote my mother, telling her that I was all right, and that I intended to remain and make my way to the front."

"That was right. I will advance you a week's wages in the morning, and before you go to the office you can look up a boarding-house. Then you can write your folks to send on your things by express, which will answer just as well as if you went back after them."

Jack made no reply, for he had no intention of sending to his people for any of his things, knowing that such a course would only put a spoke in his plans.

He did not know that his father was already in the city looking for him, and that the police department had sent out a general alarm in the hope of locating him.

An exact description of his appearance was posted in every police station in Manhattan, and the officers had been instructed to keep an eye out for him.

The policeman who had met him at midnight in the Tenderloin the previous night reported the fact at the Thirtieth Street station as soon as he heard the boy was wanted.

He also reported what Jack had told him about Bill Squires and Jim Coney, and detectives were now searching the Tenderloin for those crooks, as the boy's statement

identified them as the burglars who had robbed the residence of Lawyer Davenport, of the Beechwood district.

Under these circumstances the reader might think that Jack Rand's career in New York City would be of brief duration.

Such, however, was not the fact.

As an evidence of how easy it is for a person who is being looked for to walk the streets of a big city undetected, even after his picture and general description have appeared in the daily press, we have only to mention a test case instituted by a prominent paper some months ago, in which one of its reporters, without any disguise whatever, paraded the public thoroughfares unnoticed for weeks, though a reward of \$100 was offered anybody who would step up to him and say, "You are Mr. Raffles."

## CHAPTER VIII.

### OVERBOARD.

After a good night's rest and a hearty breakfast, Jack, with a week's wages in his pocket, left the home of his employer and started out to find a boarding-house for himself.

Mr. Ridge's sister had cut several advertisements of boarding-houses out of the morning paper and handed them to Jack for his guidance, and armed with these he had no great difficulty in finding a satisfactory place on Seventy-second Street near the elevated station.

He paid a week's board in advance, told the landlady that it might be some time before his trunk arrived, and then took a train downtown for the office.

He was careful to get off at the same station where he, the lawyer and his sister boarded the train the previous afternoon, and so had no trouble in making his way to No. — Nassau Street, where Mr. Ridge's office was.

As soon as he appeared, Mr. Evans, the chief clerk, put him to work, after carefully explaining the details of the job in hand.

Jack took hold right off and gave the clerk very little trouble.

Mr. Ridge came in soon after, remained a few minutes and then departed for one of the courts.

At half-past twelve Jack was told he could go to lunch, and was directed where he could find a restaurant suitable to his needs.

During the afternoon he made the acquaintance of Lilian Page, the stenographer, and the girl seemed quite taken with his looks and manners.

At five o'clock his duties were over for the day, and he started for his boarding-house.

As Jack was leaving the Seventy-second Street station he spied, close to the foot of the stairs, a small wallet.

He picked it up and opened it.

It contained \$20 in bills and sixty cents in loose change.

There were also several postage stamps, some memoranda, apparently unimportant, and a small piece of a dress pattern.

There was not the slightest clue, however, to the identity of the owner.

The wallet was bound and ornamented with silver, and seemed to be the property of some well-to-do woman.

"This is a dandy find," said Jack to himself. "I need

money mighty bad to supply myself with a whole lot of things I require, and I was wondering how I would be able to get them, but this will solve the difficulty in great shape. I can't touch it for a few days, until I see whether or not it is advertised for. If it isn't I may consider myself at liberty to appropriate the funds."

He secretly hoped that the owner would not worry over her loss to the extent of advertising for the wallet, for he needed the money badly; but, nevertheless, he intended to watch the "Lost and Found" column of the papers taken at the office, in justice to the owner.

That night he wrote another letter to his mother, stating that he was getting along fine.

He said he had a swell position in an office, the location and business of which he prudently neglected to mention.

He further said he was boarding at a nice house in a good section of New York, the address of which he likewise suppressed.

"I don't expect to return home until vacation is over, at any rate," he went on to say, "so don't worry about me, for I can take care of myself, all right."

He also wrote a second letter to Howard Edgerton, in which he detailed all his adventures in the Tenderloin, including his second encounter with the two burglars.

He mentioned the scrap he had had with the young tough at the corner of Broadway and Worth Street, dwelling with a good deal of satisfaction on the way he had knocked his opponent out.

"You may believe me or not, Howard," he wrote, "but I was down to my last nickel at the time, and I gave that to the little newsboy. It looked as if I would have no dinner last night, nor a bed, either, except the hard side of a bench in one of the parks. But no such hard luck happened to me, after all. That scrap, or rather the giving up of my last nickel, landed me in a first-class job, and at this writing I'm walking on the sunny side of Easy Street. You remember that story-book, 'Adrift in a Great City,' I loaned you to read? Well, I was all of that myself for thirty-six hours, but things are looking up now. When I get back home I expect to have enough material to furnish incidents for several bang-up stories. I'd like to hear from you, as well as from the folks, but for several reasons which you will understand I do not care to furnish any clues to my present whereabouts. And now, so-long, old chappie, until you hear from me again, which you may expect to do in the near future."

Jack watched the papers for an advertisement relating to the lost wallet, but nothing of the kind appearing by Saturday, Jack used a part of the money to purchase a suit-case and such apparel as was absolutely necessary for him to have.

He spent Sunday walking around town, and though he passed half a dozen policemen in the course of the day, not one of them took sufficient notice of him to identify him as the boy who was wanted at headquarters.

Major Rand returned home after remaining two days in the city without having obtained any clue to the whereabouts of his son.

He read the second letter received by his wife from Jack, and feeling satisfied that the boy was all right, and apparently resolved on carrying out some special purpose, he decided to let things take their course.

Jack wrote a fourth letter home on Sunday night, and its tenor still further reassured his father, and relieved the anxiety of his mother and sister.

Jack's first letter to Howard Edgerton, written on the morning after his arrival in the Bronx, and containing a full account of his adventures up to that date, had created no little surprise and excitement among his companions to whom Howard read it.

One and all envied Jack the spree he was on, as they called it, and wished they were with him.

His second letter to Edgerton was also eagerly perused by his Beechwood associates, and all agreed that he was having a swell time of it.

They figured that the job he had must be a cinch, otherwise they could not understand why he was so pleased to be doing work in vacation time.

Certainly not one of them really understood Jack's object in remaining in New York.

They classed it as a remarkable kind of lark, and let it go at that.

They never dreamed that Jack had started out to make his way in the world independent of his wealthy father and the family influences, just as though he were a poor boy and wholly dependent on his own exertions.

The major was the first who got an inkling of his son's plans from a letter Jack wrote him during the following week, and he smiled grimly to himself as he read it, and wondered how long the boy would hold out.

He forgot that Jack was endowed with the same dogged perseverance that had marked his own successful business career, and that it would be a mighty long time before his son would voluntarily return to his luxurious home.

Jack continued to write regularly, though briefly, to his mother, so that she might have no cause to worry about him, but he only wrote to Howard Edgerton when he had something out of the common to say.

He had been three weeks in Mr. Ridge's employ, and was giving the greatest satisfaction, when one afternoon he was sent to Ellis Island on business.

Ellis Island, as probably most of our readers know, is where all the immigrants reaching New York from foreign parts are first landed, pending examination as to their availability as future citizens of this great republic.

Most of them pass the ordeal successfully and are allowed to land upon our shores proper; but a few are turned down for state and other reasons, and have to be deported by the steamship companies that brought them hither.

It happened that a certain immigrant who had friends in New York was held up on the island, and the commissioner decided that he must go back whence he came.

This decision raised a howl among his friends, and finding that mere protests amounted to nothing, they hired Mr. Ridge to put the machinery of the law in motion for the unfortunate one's benefit.

The lawyer succeeded in obtaining a stay, pending advices from Washington, the case having been submitted to the head man there.

That was the best that could be done, for the chief's decision was final.

A bit of new evidence favorable to the detained one having cropped up, Mr. Ridge directed Jack to carry it to the commissioner at the island.

Jack was delighted to be employed on this errand, as it offered him a fine chance to see the immigration depot, of which he had heard a great deal.

He reached the island all right, delivered his document at the proper place, and then took in the sights of the Government reservation.

After he had seen all he wanted he caught the boat just as she was about to return for the city.

It was a hot, but gusty, July afternoon, and the wind was kicking up the whitecaps in the bay.

The little Government boat wobbled along like a tipsy sailor trying to walk a chalk-line.

There were quite a number of passengers on board, and among them Jack noticed a stylishly-dressed and very pretty girl, a year younger than himself, who was accompanied by her mother, as he presumed.

The motion of the boat seemed to have very little effect upon her spirits, which seemed to be at high-water mark.

Her mother and the other ladies appeared, on the contrary, quite nervous and disturbed.

Jack was sitting at the extreme stern of the boat and he was so taken with the charming girl that he seldom took his eyes off her.

The boat was about half-way between the island and the Battery when the fair girl's attention was suddenly attracted by some floating object in the water.

She leaned over the rail to get a better look at it, and Jack did likewise.

At that moment the little steamboat rose on a heavy swell and lurched smartly to the leeward.

Jack had to grab the rail to save himself from going over. It was then that a shrill scream broke upon his ears.

He recovered himself just in time to see the girl he had been admiring go hurtling from the rail toward the water.

She struck the surface of the turbulent bay with a splash and disappeared.

The girl's mother screamed and all the passengers were thrown into the greatest dismay and confusion.

That is, all but Jack.

Without a moment's delay he threw off his hat and jacket, kicked off his shoes, and took a header into the water in the direction the unfortunate young lady had gone.

## CHAPTER IX.

### JACK MAKES A GALLANT RESCUE.

Jack went into the bay like a torpedo from the tube of a warship, taking the plunge with all the grace of an experienced diver, as indeed he was.

In a moment or two he rose to the surface, shook the moisture from his eyes, and struck out for the spot where the girl had disappeared.

Jack could swim like a duck.

He was noted among his Beechwood friends for his expertness in this respect.

It seemed to run in the family, for his sister Florence was a fine swimmer, while both his father and mother, in their younger days, had been good at it.

The imperiled girl came up before Jack was anywhere within reach of her.

She was seen from the steamer, which had come to a stop

by this time, to struggle wildly in the water and then sink again.

Jack caught a fleeting glimpse of her and put forth all his strength to get to the spot where he calculated she would come up again.

He cut his way through the waves like a fish, swimming harder than he had ever done before in his life, for he knew a human life depended on his exertions.

When the girl rose again Jack was close to her.

She was still conscious and thrashed the water frantically with her arms.

Jack saw that it would take some skill to grab her right so she would not get hold of him with a drowning person's grip.

He aimed to seize her from behind, and succeeded just as she started to sink for the third time.

"Stop struggling and I will save you!" he said.

The terrified girl paid no attention to this request, and Jack was obliged to sustain her and let her exhaust herself.

In a few minutes her arms lay motionless in the water and her head fell over as if she had become unconscious.

As soon as she became quiet the plucky boy altered his position somewhat, and holding her up with one arm, began to swim back toward the little steamer with the other.

The boat had come about and was steaming toward him, the deckhands gathered at the rail forward with lines in their hands ready to cast at the young rescuer.

Just before he got alongside of the boat the girl revived and began to struggle again.

Jack held her tightly and succeeded in calming her fears, then she remained quiet, with her dilated eyes fastened on his face.

The brave boy caught the first line flung to him and wound his right arm about it.

He and the girl were speedily drawn up against the steamer, which immediately stopped.

One of the deckhands leaned over, and as the boat dipped to the leeward, he caught hold of Jack's burden and dragged her on deck.

Jack then seized the line with the other hand and was pulled aboard in a jiffy.

There was nothing but praise for the young law clerk after that.

Half of the passengers gathered in a bunch around him and complimented him for his pluck in going to the aid of the drowning girl.

The young lady was taken to the captain's room, where she was attended by her mother and two other ladies who were anxious to be of service to her, while the hero of the occasion was led down into the boiler-room below the deck, and told to strip.

His clothes were wrung out and hung up to dry; and were soon steaming under the heat of the place.

They were almost dry by the time the boat was made fast to her dock.

The girl had also been disrobed and put into the captain's berth, and her clothes sent to the boiler-room.

As soon as his garments were thoroughly dry Jack put them on again, and was told to go to the captain's room.

Here he was overwhelmed with the mother's grateful thanks, to which the girl added hers.

He learned that her name was Flora Sanders, and in response to her mother's request he gave his own name and business address.

"You must call on us, Mr. Rand," said Mrs. Sanders. "We live at No. — East Sixty-fifth Street, near Madison Avenue. When may we expect you?"

"I can call 'most any evening, or on Sunday afternoon," he replied.

"Then come up to-morrow evening. Mr. Sanders will be impatient to thank you for the great service you have rendered our daughter."

"All right," replied Jack. "I will call to-morrow evening with pleasure."

He was then permitted to go, after receiving a sweet smile from Flora.

Jack looked little the worse for his unexpected bath in the upper bay or harbor when he walked into Mr. Ridge's office half an hour later.

He had a story to tell, however, that greatly interested the lawyer, as well as the head clerk and the stenographer, when it reached their ears.

"My goodness, you must be a fine swimmer!" said Miss Page to Jack, as she was putting on her hat to go home. "And how brave you were to jump overboard after that young lady," she added, with an admiring look at him.

"I am a good swimmer," replied the young clerk. "I'm in the water every day at home during warm weather. All the fellows I know can swim. So can my sister and most of the other girls in our set. Then my mother and father are not so bad at it, either. Swimming is a healthy amusement, and I'm fond of it."

"Well, your name will be in the papers now as a young life-saver," smiled the stenographer. "Everybody will be reading about your gallant deed to-morrow morning."

Jack didn't like to hear that.

He remembered that he had given his name and office address to Mrs. Sanders.

If his address was printed in the newspapers his father and mother, as well as all who knew him in Beechwood, would probably see it, and then he might expect a visit from the major, who would doubtless cut his business career quite short.

Jack was getting along so well on the lines he had marked out for himself that he strongly objected to any interference on the part of his folks.

Consequently he looked the papers over next morning with some eagerness and anxiety.

The first paper he took up had the story on the first page.

He learned that the girl he had saved was the daughter of a dry-goods merchant, who was also one of the city park commissioners.

His own name and the address he had given were printed, but no mention was made of his business or employer, which he now remembered he had not stated to Mrs. Sanders.

"Well, that's some comfort, at any rate," mused Jack. "There are eleven floors and more than 100 offices in our building. It wouldn't be easy to locate the particular office where I am employed. Still, my father would probably make a tour of every office, floor by floor, till he found me. I'd be ever so much obliged to him if he wouldn't take all that trouble, but it's just like him to do it. Mother would no doubt make him, anyway, for I've no doubt she wants

me home. It's too bad that a fellow can't be allowed to do as he pleases."

That evening Jack called at the Sanders' home on Sixty-fifth Street, as he had promised to do.

He received a royal welcome from the whole family.

Mr. Sanders expressed his own grateful appreciation of his service in suitable terms, and told Jack that it would give him great pleasure if he could show his gratitude in some substantial way.

Jack assured him that his thanks were sufficient, and refused to entertain any thought of other reward.

Flora looked prettier than ever in a dainty house gown, and she had spent an hour or more before her glass in order to look her best in expectation of meeting him again.

She thanked Jack all over again for saving her life, and declared that he was just too brave for anything for coming to her rescue.

"You don't suppose I was going to let you drown if there was a possibility of my preventing it, do you?" asked Jack, blushing under her praises and the glances of her bright eyes.

"I don't believe that many boys in your place would have done as you did," she replied. "I shall never forget how good you were as long as I live."

"I'll take your word for it," he laughed.

"It's just as if you and I were the hero and heroine of a story-book."

"How do you mean?"

"Why, for me to fall overboard and you to jump in and rescue me from a watery grave."

"Watery grave is good," chuckled Jack. "I'd be willing to do it all over again for the pleasure of saving such a nice girl as you are."

Flora blushed vividly at this compliment.

"I am sure you said that very nice, Mr. Rand," she replied, with a sly glance in his face; "but I don't think I'd care to repeat the experience."

"No, I don't think it would pay you to make a practice of it. You might not always find a good swimmer ready to leap in after you."

"I agree with you," she laughed. "Once in a lifetime is quite enough. I consider myself very fortunate in being saved by such a brave young man as you are."

"Now you're throwing me a bouquet."

"Oh, no; I mean it."

"What difference does it make who saved you as long as you were saved?"

"Well, it's ever so much more romantic to be rescued by a nice young man, don't you know?" she said, coquettishly.

"You said that very nice yourself. I assure you I appreciate the honor of having been favored with the opportunity of doing you such a distinguished service."

"After all, when you come to look at it, it seems just a little bit ridiculous on my part to take such an undignified tumble and thus oblige a total stranger to wet himself through and through all for the benefit of my humble self."

"You forget that the total stranger in question had been admiring you for half an hour at a distance, and that fate was very kind to him to put the chance in his way to get acquainted with such a charming girl as yourself."

"Oh!" almost gasped Flora, blushing deeper than before. "Did you really notice me before—"

"You went into the water? I couldn't help doing so. I have met a great many very nice girls up my way, but none who can hold a candle to you. I simply couldn't help looking at you and wishing I were acquainted with you. So you see I am fully repaid for pulling you out of your watery grave by having the pleasure at this moment of sitting alongside of you and listening to the tones of your silvery voice."

"Dear me, I'm afraid you'll make me too conceited for anything," she replied, with a demure look.

"I'm willing to take the risk, for I don't think you're built that way."

"Wait till you know me better," she answered, roguishly.

"The better I know you the better an opinion I shall have of you."

"I'm satisfied now that you are trying to spoil me."

"You mustn't have that opinion. At any rate, I hope you will permit me to call on you occasionally. I wouldn't like to lose sight of you after the strenuous endeavor I made to get acquainted with you."

"You didn't jump in after me just to get acquainted with me, did you?" he asked, flashing another of her bewitching sidelong glances at him.

"No. Your life was my first consideration. The acquaintance followed as a matter of course."

"I shall be very happy to have you call as often as you care to do so," she said.

"Thank you. Don't blame me if I take advantage of your permission."

"I hope you will do so. Do you like music?"

"It is one of my weaknesses. You play, of course?" he said, glancing at the open piano.

"A little," she answered, rising and crossing to the instrument.

She soon showed that she was an artist, and Jack enjoyed her playing immensely.

"Do you sing?" she asked

"A little," he laughed.

He had a good voice, and displayed it to the best advantage.

She had a very sweet voice herself, too.

They sang separately and together, and enjoyed themselves very much indeed.

Mrs. Sanders returned to the room to enjoy the performance, and she complimented Jack on his singing.

Finally the time came around for him to go, and he took up his hat with some reluctance.

Flora accompanied him to the front door, and seemed anxious to know when he would favor her with another call.

"Next Wednesday, if you say so," he said.

"Very well. I will expect to see you next Wednesday evening."

Then she bade him good-night, and allowed her hand to remain in his while he said "good-night" for the second time.

After that he went to his boarding-house.

## CHAPTER X.

### AT BEECHWOOD.

It was nine o'clock on the following morning. The Rand family, minus the presence of Jack, were

seated at the breakfast table in the large and handsomely-furnished dining-room which commanded a fine view of Long Island Sound.

The butler, a solemn-visaged, smoothly-shaven man of portly and dignified bearing, entered the room noiselessly as was his custom and deposited the mail and several New York and Boston morning papers at the major's elbow.

The head of the house took up the letters one by one and inspected them.

"Here are two letters for you, Florence," he said, motioning to the butler.

That functionary walked slowly over, received the letters and conveyed them to the young lady who was seated not over three feet away.

"And here is another letter from that young scamp of ours," went on the major, balancing it on his fingers.

"Is it for me?" asked his wife, eagerly, from her seat at the opposite end of the table.

"Of course it's for you," chuckled the major, handing it to the butler to carry to his mistress. "He doesn't consider me worth the price of a postage-stamp."

There was also a letter for Major Rand himself, and for some moments the family were busily engaged with their correspondence, while the butler stood solemnly aloof, as stiff as a ramrod, gazing into vacancy.

After reading his letter, which was brief, the major took up a New York daily, unfolded it and began to read.

As his practiced eyes glanced rapidly over the news on the first page they suddenly stopped at one spot, as if his attention was riveted by what he saw there.

Presently he gave utterance to a prolonged whistle.

His wife and daughter looked up and glanced at him inquiringly.

"Well, upon my word, if that precious runaway hasn't been making a hero of himself!" exclaimed the major, in a tone that showed he was evidently pleased.

"What do you mean, Wilford?" asked his wife, in some surprise.

"What do you suppose Jack did yesterday?"

"Jack! Not our Jack?"

"Yes, our Jack. Jack Rand."

"You don't mean to say that he's got himself in trouble?" asked Mrs. Rand, anxiously.

"One can't always say as to that where a woman is concerned," chuckled the major.

"Don't keep me in suspense, Wilford. What has happened to Jack?"

"He jumped overboard into New York harbor from the Ellis Island boat and saved the life of Flora Sanders, daughter of Park Commissioner Sanders."

"Let me read about it, father?" asked Florence, eagerly, reaching out her hand for the paper.

The butler stepped forward to get it for her, but was a mile behind time, for Florence rose and got it herself.

"The paper gives him a great deal of credit for his plucky action," continued Major Rand, addressing his wife. "Whatever Quixotic notions Jack has got in his head of late I'm bound to say that he's a credit to the family," added the major, proudly. "By the way, the paper gives us a line on him at last. His business address was secured by the reporter, and is printed in connection with his name."

"Then you'll go to New York and bring him home at once, won't you?" said the fond mother, eagerly.

"I don't know about that, Clara. The boy seems able to look after himself. I feel disposed now to let him hoe his own row till he gets tired and voluntarily returns, as I presume he will when the high school term opens. I admire his independence, my dear. He's just like I was at his age. It won't do him any harm to pick up a little knowledge of the world for himself. He's built of the right stuff, and such boys don't often go wrong, so I have no fear for him."

"But, Wilford, he is losing all his vacation," protested his wife.

"That's his business. I assume that he knows his own mind. If he prefers work to play, the experience won't hurt him any. It may, on the contrary, do him a whole lot of good. Don't you worry about him, Clara. Jack will come out at the top of the heap. And to think it has all come about because I wouldn't raise the ante with him," chuckled the major. "There'll be quite a little sum of spending money accumulated by the time he gets back. That will probably extricate him from his financial predicament."

"I should like to go to New York and see him, at any rate," said his wife.

"Very well, Clara. We'll take the afternoon train, and I'll look him up in the morning. It's funny that the police of Manhattan have never identified him on the street. I was told that every officer on the force would be on the lookout for him. And that reminds me that the New York police department have not yet caught those two rascals who robbed Mr. Davenport's place. It seems they gave Jack a hard rub, and were the primary cause of his journey to New York."

"The poor boy must have suffered in that freight-car," said Mrs. Rand.

"I dare say he looked upon it as a first-class adventure, judging from the tone of his first letter to Howard Edger-ton. It is singular how he met them afterward in a saloon in the Tenderloin. That is the only part of Jack's experience I don't like. He did not explain how he came to enter that saloon. Possibly he went in to find out where he was, for it was only his second night in the city, and he was all astray."

"He wrote Howard that he slept that night in a cheap lodging-house," said Mrs. Rand, with a shudder. "The dear boy, how could he go to such a place when there are so many good hotels in the city?"

"According to his letter he didn't have the price."

"But he could have explained who he was, as well as his predicament, and then telegraphed home for money," said the lady.

"He could, but evidently he didn't want to do that. In the one letter he wrote me he said that he didn't want to be under obligations to me. Think of that, the young scamp!" again chuckled the major.

"Mother, do read what the paper says about Jack," cried Florence at this juncture, passing the newspaper to her mother.

Mrs. Rand read the article and smiled, and then she and her daughter began talking about the absent one of the household.

The Rands were not the only ones in the Beechwood dis-

trict who read about Jack Rand's exploit in the morning papers.

Howard Edgerton read it and he nearly fell off his chair at the breakfast table with astonishment.

Will Langdon and Fred Bartling also read the story and were just as much surprised.

The three boys met immediately after breakfast and Jack was the sole topic of their conversation.

"Gee! He's a peach!" said Will.

"I should say he is," agreed Fred.

"A whole basket of peaches," coincided Howard. "He has done as much as the hero of any book I've ever read. Just think of him jumping into the middle of New York harbor and saving that girl's life, the daughter of one of the park commissioners, too! I suppose he'll marry her some day and live happily ever afterward," he grinned.

"I wonder if she's pretty?" said Will.

"Of course she's pretty," replied Howard. "Did you ever hear of a fellow saving a girl that wasn't pretty."

"The newspaper doesn't say whether she's pretty or not," said Fred.

"The paper doesn't say everything," answered Howard. "I've got a dollar to bet that Flora Sanders is prettier than any girl in Beechwood."

"I'll take you," said Will, who was sweet on Cassie Davenport, and thought her the finest-looking girl going.

"I'll hold the stakes," laughed Fred.

No bet materialized, however, though there was a good deal of bluffing over it.

"The paper gives his business address," said Howard. "Let the three of us hike it to New York and surprise him?"

That suited the others, so it was agreed to start for New York in the morning.

"He'll have a fit when he sees the three of us marching into his place," grinned Will.

"So much the better," chuckled Howard. "He deserves it for not letting us know where he was hanging out so we could write him."

"What do you s'pose he's doing?" asked Fred.

"How should I know? He never said a word about it in his letters," replied Howard.

"I guess he was afraid you'd give him away to his father."

"I can't understand what he's up to in the city," said Will. "He's losing the whole of his vacation. You wouldn't catch me doing that."

"He's got a fat snap of some kind, you can bet your life. He's a sly rooster, not to let us know anything about what it is," said Howard. "We ought to give him a roast when we see him."

"Well, we'll find out to-morrow what he's doing, all right, and then we'll have the bulge on him."

The three then walked down to the boat-house to tell the rest of the boys.

## CHAPTER XI.

### STRANDED.

It was about eleven o'clock on the following morning that the head clerk told Jack to take a certain legal document to a client in the Tribune Building.

He put on his hat, caught a descending elevator, and

was soon on the ground floor walking toward the main entrance of the building.

As he started through the doorway, a fine-looking man of military bearing came in from the street.

The eyes of both rested on the other at the same moment.

"Father!" ejaculated the boy, starting forward joyfully in spite of a sense of chagrin that he felt at being caught at last.

"Jack! My dear boy!" exclaimed the major, seizing his son.

"I'm glad to see you, father. How is mother and sis?"

"They are quite well, and are waiting to see you at the Waldorf Hotel."

"Then they came to town with you?"

"Yes. Your mother insisted on coming, and as Florence wanted to come, too, why here we are. Now you will come up right away, won't you?"

"I would like to, father, but I have business to attend to. I am on my way to the Tribune Building now with a legal document for a client."

"Are you in a lawyer's office?"

"Yes. I am working for Kenneth Ridge, on the eighth floor."

"I cannot understand your idea of staying in New York and working in preference to enjoying your regular summer vacation at home, where you have every luxury and convenience your heart can wish for," said Major Rand, as he and Jack walked up Nassau Street together.

"Well, father, I don't believe I could explain the matter to your satisfaction, so I won't attempt to do it. I hope you won't insist on my going home right away, for I should prefer not to do it. I am getting on all right, and neither you nor mother has any cause to be worried about me. I'm living at a very nice boarding-house on Seventy-second Street, and feel very comfortable there. New York suits me all right, and I don't want to quit it just yet."

"Well, Jack, I have decided to let you have your own way until it is time for you to go back to school, then I shall insist on your coming home."

"Very well, father, we'll let it go at that."

"As I did not come on to take you back, your mother accompanied me, as she is very anxious to see you. When can you come to the hotel?"

"Mr. Ridge is at the Supreme Court chambers now, but he'll be back between twelve and one. I'll ask him to let me off this afternoon, and then I'll go right up to the Waldorf."

"All right, Jack, I'll go back and tell your mother she may look for you about two o'clock," said the major, as he bade his son good-bye at the entrance of the Tribune Building.

When Mr. Ridge returned to the office at about half-past twelve, Jack told him that his parents had come to the city to see him and that he'd like to get off for the afternoon.

"You may go, Jack," said the lawyer, and accordingly the boy hurried uptown as fast as he could get there by a Broadway car.

When he reached the Waldorf Hotel he explained to the clerk that he was Major Rand's son, and asked to be shown up to his room.

A bellboy was sent to show him the way, and a few min-

utes later he was in his mother's arms, with his sister's embrace to follow.

We will not describe the interview, which was cut short by Major Rand suggesting that they should adjourn to the dining-room for lunch.

At the table Mrs. Rand tried to induce Jack to give up his position and return with them that afternoon to Beechwood.

Jack, however, declined to fall in with his mother's views.

She wanted to know how he was living and enjoying himself, and Jack made no secret of anything.

Mrs. Rand was astonished that her son could be contented to remain at a boarding-house and go to work every day when he had a fine home and all the pleasures of vacation life at his disposal.

"Never mind, mother," he laughed, "what's the difference so long as I'm satisfied? When I come home by and by you'll learn all my reasons for what seems to you a strange proceeding on my part."

He remained with his folks till it was time for them to leave for home by the five o'clock train, and then he accompanied them to the Grand Central Station.

As they bid him good-bye his father tendered him a \$50 bill, but Jack refused to accept it.

"You can't give me a cent this trip, father. I'm making my own way without help from anybody, and I'm not going to spoil matters now. I've got all the money I require, anyway, so it's no use to me."

The major shrugged his shoulders and returned the bill to his pocket.

A minute later Jack was walking out of the depot on his way to his boarding-house.

On the following afternoon, about five o'clock, as Jack was preparing to lock up the office, the head clerk and the stenographer having just gone, there came a knock at the door.

It was an uncertain kind of knock, and not very loud, and as Jack walked toward the door he heard a noise outside as if something had tumbled down.

When he opened the door he saw an old, gray-bearded and gray-headed man lying in a confused heap against the casing.

The man's eyes were closed and he was breathing heavily, as though unconscious.

Jack grabbed him by the arms, dragged him into the office and placed him in a chair.

The old chap, who was shabbily dressed, opened his eyes, groaned dismally, and closed them again.

Jack rushed into the lavatory, fetched a glass of water and put it to his lips.

The stranger opened his eyes, took a few sips and then groaned and shut his eyes again.

Jack remembered that a flask of cognac was kept in the closet to be used in case of emergency.

He got it and poured some of it down the man's throat.

He revived, sat up and looked at the boy in a strange kind of way.

"Are you ill?" asked Jack, in a sympathetic tone.

"I feel bad," replied the man. "It's weakness, for I've eaten scarcely anything for two or three days."

"Why? Haven't you any money with which to buy food?"

"Not a cent."

"Then I'll give you a quarter so you can get yourself a square meal."

"What is one square meal to a starving man?" groaned the old man. "I'm a stranger in the city. I'm stopping at the Mills Hotel, but my room runs out to-night and I know not where to go, nor what will become of me."

"You're in a pretty bad fix," said Jack, feeling very sorry for the man, who seemed to be on a par with the derelicts who drift to the poorhouse on the island. "Haven't you any property at all that you could raise some money on?"

"Nothing but this," replied the stranger, taking a long envelope from his pocket. "I've been trying to sell it among the brokers, but no one wants it. They tell me it is not worth the paper it's written on."

"What is it?" asked Jack, curiously.

"A certificate of mining stock."

The old man took a document out of the envelope and handed it to the boy.

Jack opened it and saw that it was a certificate for 10,000 shares of the Echo Valley Gold Mining Company, Echo Valley, Colorado, with offices at Denver.

The certificate was made out in the name of John Grant.

"Is your name John Grant?" asked Jack.

"It is."

"You say this stock is worthless?"

"It seems so, for no broker will buy it at any price. They told me the mine was as good as dead, although it is not so long ago it was quoted on the Goldfield Exchange at ten cents a share. I paid 25 cents a share for it two years ago when it was listed at that price, and advertised as a coming producer."

"Is it a real mine, or only a wildcat?"

"It's a real mine."

"Then why aren't these shares worth something?"

"Because the bottom has fallen out of the mine, I suppose."

Jack didn't quite understand what he meant by the bottom having fallen out of the mine, but presumed he referred to a cave-in below the surface.

"Well, I'll tell you what I'll do for you, Mr. Grant," said Jack. "I'll give you \$10 for this certificate. It looks nice enough to frame and hang up in my room at home. The \$10 will help you out and won't break me."

"You can have it. It is of no use to me now. If the mine ever should amount to anything you'll be the gainer, but I have no hopes that it will."

Jack thought that was an honest admission, at any rate, so he handed the old man a \$10 bill and put the certificate in his pocket.

"Better take another drink before you go downstairs," he said, seeing that the stranger was looking faint again. "Then I'll go with you as far as a restaurant. I wouldn't advise you to eat too much at first, if you have been starving for three days. Take a plate of soup, or something like that, and let solid food go for an hour or two."

The stranger took another drink of the brandy, which brightened him up, then Jack helped him outside, locked the office, assisted him to the elevator, and when they got downstairs he went with him to a nearby restaurant.

To guard against accidents Jack had the bill changed for him, and left him eating a plate of hot soup.

"That's \$10 gone to pot," said Jack to himself, as he walked toward the Sixth Avenue elevated station; "but I guess it's spent in a good cause."

Jack forgot that bread thrown on the waters often returns tenfold after many days, and it proved so in his case.

## CHAPTER XII.

### JACK HAS VISITORS FROM BEECHWOOD.

Howard Edgerton, Will Langdon and Fred Bartling did not take the nine o'clock train for New York on that particular morning they had arranged to do so, owing to the fact that the other boys had decided to row across the Sound in their club-boat if the weather permitted, and it was necessary that Howard, Will and Fred should not absent themselves from their places.

So Jack Rand escaped the surprise intended for him on that occasion.

On the following Saturday, however, Howard, Will and Fred connected with the nine o'clock train and landed at the Grand Central about two hours later.

Howard was well acquainted with the city, and he led the way to a car that would take them to the post-office.

When they got out at the loop in front of the post-office, Howard told his companions to follow him, and marched straight for the corner of Ann Street.

One short block down that narrow thoroughfare brought them to Nassau Street, and then all they had to do was to walk straight ahead till they came to the office building where Jack was employed.

Then they discovered that they were up against it.

Here was an eleven-story building, the directory of which showed more than 100 offices, all occupied.

In which of these offices were they to find Jack?

"Say, who does he work for?" asked Will.

"Blest if I know," replied Howard, scratching his head in a puzzled way. "I never thought we'd bump up against anything like this."

"There's a chap over there with a cap and uniform. Let's ask him. He may know Jack."

So they walked over to the man and Howard asked him if he knew in what office Jack Rand was working.

The man shook his head.

"It's enough for me to keep track of the people who rent offices in this building, without figuring on the folks who work for them. There are probably all of 500 employees in this building. How do you expect me to know who they are?"

The boys admitted the reasonableness of his argument and were turning away disappointed when the man said:

"Do you know what kind of business he is in?"

"No, we don't even know that," replied Howard.

"Then I'm afraid I can't help you," said the man.

"What shall we do now?" asked Fred.

"Let's stand around in the corridor awhile. We might see him when he goes out to lunch. It is about twelve o'clock now," suggested Will.

They concluded to do that since they couldn't do anything better unless, as Howard said, they made a tour of the offices on each floor and asked for Jack.

They had waited nearly an hour, and were getting rather tired of the job, when Will suddenly exclaimed:

"There he is now, just coming out of the elevator!"

The others looked, and sure enough, there was Jack starting to cross the corridor toward the entrance.

They swooped down on him in a bunch and grabbed him on all sides.

"How are you, old man?" cried Howard.

"You're looking as fine as silk, Jack!" cried Will.

"Aren't you glad to see us?" ejaculated Fred.

Jack was taken completely by surprise.

He hadn't the least notion of seeing his three particular friends in New York.

"Gee whiz!" he exclaimed; "where did you all spring from?"

"We came on from Fairhaven this morning to see you, and to find out how you were getting on."

"Well, I'm glad to see you, fellows. Come and have lunch with me."

"Sure," laughed Howard, "we couldn't think of refusing such an invitation."

"Don't imagine I'm going to take you up to Delmonico's. I'm not drawing a private income from my father just now. I'm dependent on what I am earning."

"Say, who are you working for, and what kind of a business is it?" asked Howard.

"I'm working for Kenneth Ridge, on the eighth floor of that building, and he's a lawyer. I'm glad you chaps made it Saturday, for I'm off for the rest of the day. All the offices shut down for half a day at this time of the year."

"That's tip-top. We'll have a swell time this afternoon, though we can't stay in town longer than five o'clock."

"Come, now, Jack, why are you staying in New York and working, anyway?" asked Fred. "What's the attraction?"

"I'm trying to make my own way in the world."

"You're trying to do what?" gasped the three boys, in astonishment.

"I'm trying to get ahead in life on my own hook. Is that any clearer?" replied Jack, amused at their amazement.

"Suffering sandpipers!" ejaculated Howard. "What do you want to do that for? Ain't your father wealthy?"

"Suppose he is? He earned his money himself. I'm going to earn mine."

"Say, you don't mean that," said Will. "You're just giving us a jolly."

"Never more earnest in my life," replied Jack, solemnly.

"What put such an idea into your head?" asked Fred.

"Just my way of doing business, that's all."

"This beats all I ever heard of," said Howard. "Are you working for wages?"

"What do you suppose I'm working for? Did you imagine I was a partner in the business?"

"I thought you had some kind of a fat snap, where you got a big salary for doing nothing."

"You thought that, did you?"

"Yes, that's what we all thought," replied Howard.

"I haven't heard of any such job outside of a political sinecure," answered Jack, with a grin.

"How long are you going to stick to this thing? Does your father know what you're about?"

"I'm going to stick to it as long as I can," replied Jack.

"As for my father, he and the folks know all about it now, though they wouldn't have found out if it hadn't been that

my name got in the paper the other day, with my office address. That brought father, mother and sis down here looking for me."

"And they found you, eh?" chuckled Howard.

"Father did. He came to the office and I ran against him coming in as I was going out. I was glad to see him, though I hated to be caught in such a way."

"What did they say about you staying in New York?"

"Mother and sis wanted me to come home right off, but father said I could do as I chose until school opened."

"Then you intend to stay here?" said Howard.

"I do," replied Jack, in a decided tone.

"Just think what you're missing," chipped in Will.

"I'm not worrying about what I'm missing. I'm enjoying myself in my own way. Here's the restaurant, fellows. This is where I eat at noontime these days, and what's good enough for me you'll have to put up with if you are going to enjoy my hospitality."

They found a vacant table and took possession of it.

A fine, healthy-looking girl waiter came up to take their orders.

"There's the bill-of-fare," said Jack. "Pick out what you want and give your orders. You'll find nearly everything but style in this place."

The visitors had healthy appetites, and were not finding fault with anything that came their way.

"Say, old man," grinned Howard, while they were eating, "what about that girl you saved from the bay?"

"You mean Miss Sanders?" asked Jack, innocently.

"Yes, Flora Sanders. That's the name I saw in the paper. She's the daughter of one of the park commissioners, isn't she?"

"Yes. She's a fine girl."

"I'll bet she is," chuckled Howard. "You wouldn't rescue any other kind of a girl."

"Do you s'pose I considered her good looks when I jumped in after her?"

"No, I don't mean that."

"What do you mean, then?"

"I mean that homely girls are not in the habit of tumbling into the water to be saved by wealthy young chaps like you."

"What has a girl's looks got to do with her falling into the water, or getting into any other kind of desperate scrape? Miss Sanders didn't fall into the bay because she was pretty, and because she expected to be saved by a wealthy fellow. She fell in because she couldn't help herself, and the accident nearly scared a year's growth out of her."

"Did you fall in love with her and she with you?" laughed Howard.

"You want to know too much all at once," flushed Jack.

"Look at him blush, fellows!" chuckled Howard.

"Who's blushing?" growled Jack.

"You are. You're as red as a boiled lobster. I'll leave it to Will and Fred."

The boys had the laugh on Jack, anyway.

"One of these days we'll all get cards for a wedding in New York town. Mr. and Mrs. Sanders request the pleasure of your company at the marriage of their daughter Flora to Mr. John Rand, of Beechwood, and so forth, and so forth," snickered Howard.

"You're awfully funny, aren't you?" said Jack.

"I wish you'd take us up and introduce us. I wanted to bet Will the other day that she's prettier than any girl in Beechwood, but he backed out, though he does think there isn't another girl in the world like Cassie Davenport."

"You mean you backed out yourself. I was willing to bet," put in Will.

"I offered to hold the stakes, but it was only a bluff all round," said Fred.

"Is Flora Sanders better-looking than Cassie?" asked Howard.

"I'm not saying anything about it," returned Jack. "If it's all the same to you we'll switch off on to something else."

Howard took the hint and nothing more was said about Miss Sanders.

After the meal they went down to the Battery and took in the Aquarium.

Then they boarded a Sixth Avenue elevated train for Central Park, where they spent the rest of the afternoon, after which Jack saw them to the Grand Central depot and bade them good-bye.

### CHAPTER XIII.

#### JACK SHOWS THE STUFF HE'S MADE OF.

Jack paid his second visit to Flora Sanders on the following Wednesday evening, according to arrangement, and he found her dressed up to the queen's taste ready to receive him.

He spent a very pleasant evening, chiefly with the girl herself, and promised to call again a week from that night.

On the following evening he took in a show at one of the Forty-second Street theaters, and when the performance was over he left the theater on the Forty-first Street side.

He started westward to take an elevated train uptown on the Ninth Avenue line.

As he approached the corner of Seventh Avenue he saw two men standing under the glare of an electric light who looked familiar to him.

A closer inspection proved them to be Bill Squires and Jim Coney.

Jack knew that the rascals had not been captured by the police for the robbery of Lawyer Davenport's residence, and it struck him that it would be a feather in his cap if he could have them arrested.

His intention was to follow them till he saw a policeman, and then point them out to the officer.

So he retired into a convenient doorway and waited for them to make a move.

In a few minutes they started across the avenue and Jack followed at a distance not likely, he thought, to attract their suspicions.

They went down Forty-first Street in the direction he was bound himself.

The block was deserted and not over well-lighted.

Jack crossed to the other side and kept them well in sight.

When they came to Eighth Avenue they crossed it and kept on, and so did Jack.

Ninth Avenue was crossed in the same way, and Tenth Avenue also, and then Jack found himself penetrating a low kind of neighborhood.

But the plucky boy was not familiar with its reputation, nor with the sinister character of its denizens.

No policeman coming in sight, Jack concluded that the best he would be able to do would be to track the two burglars to their destination.

This accomplished, he intended to walk all the way back to Broadway, if necessary, in order to find an officer, when he intended to offer to guide the policeman to the house where he had seen the men go in.

Few boys would have taken the chances Jack was doing in order to secure the arrest of a pair of criminals.

Jack, however, believed it to be his duty to have the burglars brought to justice, especially as the police had so far failed to apprehend them.

Besides, he owed them a grudge for treating him as they had done on the occasion of their accidental encounter in the wood at home.

He felt that it would give him a whole lot of satisfaction to get square with them, and, if possible, assist in recovering a part at least of their booty.

Half-way between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues the men entered a low saloon.

Jack wondered if this was their destination.

There were several trucks standing along the block, and the boy sat on the end of one and watched the saloon door for awhile.

Men of all colors and conditions below the respectable standard entered and left the gin-mill, but Squires and Coney did not reappear.

Finally Jack slipped across the street and peered in through the swinging blinds that cut off the view of the bar-room from the sidewalk.

While he was watching them a young man came down the street.

"What are you lookin' at, young fellow?" he asked, as he pushed Jack to one side and laid his hands on one of the blinds as if about to enter.

Jack glanced up in a startled way and their eyes met.

He knew the young man at once.

It was Curtis Jett.

The recognition was mutual, and Jett uttered an exclamation of surprise.

"So it's you, is it?" he said, with a malicious grin. "Found your way to this place, eh? Takin' in the sights of the city after dark? Let me be your guide."

With those words he pushed Jack into the saloon.

The boy tried to slip aside and escape, but Curtis Jett grabbed him by the arm and led him well forward.

This attracted general attention to both of the newcomers.

Jett was well known to the habitues of the saloon, as he lodged in one of the houses of the block.

Bill Squires recognized Jack right away, for his sharp eyes were never asleep.

The same might be said of Jim Coney, but he didn't see the boy, as his back was turned to him.

With both of them eternal vigilance was the price of safety.

As soon as Jett saw Squires and Coney he pushed Jack toward them.

"Here's this young chap again, my bucks. I caught him squintin' in through the door at you both. I guess he was

tryin' to get a line on you so as to blow the gaff to the cops. You'd better attend to him, as it's none of my funeral."

Squires uttered a fierce malediction.

"So you're followin' us, you young monkey, are you?" he said, seizing Jack by the collar. "Been tryin' to get on our track again since you met us at the saloon that night. Achin' to do what the cops have failed to do, eh? You must be a fool to come after us here. Well, I reckon we'll fix you so you won't follow us any more."

Thus speaking, Squires yanked Jack down on a seat. Then he made a significant gesture to Coney.

That worthy got up, walked to the bar and said something to the barkeeper in a low tone.

The man nodded after casting a look at the boy, and taking a glass began to prepare a drink.

When it was ready he handed it to Coney, who carried it over to the table where Squires was holding Jack down.

"Now, then, my young butter-in, you've got to drink our healths, d'y'e understand?" said Squires, glowering down at the boy.

"You won't make me drink anything," replied Jack, defiantly.

"Won't I? We'll see about that. Come here, Jim, and pry open his jaw with your knuckles."

Jack started in to make a good fight against his persecutors, and one of the first things he did was to give Squires a heavy kick in the shins which caused that rascal to give a yell and let go of his victim.

He had injured his shin that morning and Jack's boot hit the tender part.

As Coney made a grab for the boy, Jack slipped down and crawled under the table, bobbing up on the other side.

Jett made a rush for him for fear he might get away, whereupon Jack dropped to the floor, tackled him football fashion and fairly threw him over his head.

The young man landed with a crash against a chair and partially demolished it.

He rolled over, dazed by the shock.

The other frequenters of the saloon did not interfere, but they looked upon the fracas with a great deal of interest.

Bill Squires was furious with pain and rage, and started for Jack with blood in his eye.

The boy was now fully aroused to the peril of his situation, and all the pluck of his nature came to the front.

Never before was he aware of what he was capable in the face of real peril.

With compressed lips and fire in his boyish eyes, he snatched up the broken chair, swung it around his head and brought it down on Squire's head and shoulders with all the force of his seasoned muscles.

The ruffian threw up his arm to ward the blow off, but the chair beat down his guard as if it had been paper, and Squires sank to the floor half stunned and bleeding.

Then, without waiting for the astonished Coney to interfere, Jack threw the chair at his head.

The barkeeper came around from behind the bar with a club in his hand.

As he made a dash at Jack, the boy snatched up the glass of drugged liquor and fired glass and all at his face.

It went as true as Jack ever sent a baseball from short to first base, striking the man in the mouth, cutting his lip and blinding him with the contents.

The uproar had aroused the immediate neighborhood, and people came flocking into and around the saloon.

As Jack turned to escape he saw that the entrance was blocked up by a hard-looking crowd, capable of doing him up if they took a notion to.

He couldn't get through them unless they permitted him to, so he did not dare chance it.

He sprang over Squires' prostrate body, avoided Coney's outstretched grasp, and darted for a rear side door.

Passing through it he found himself in a dimly-lit hall, the front end of which opened on the street, while a rear door communicated with a filthy yard.

He made a dash for the front door, which stood open.

Before he could reach it the opening was blocked by the mob outside.

He turned to retrace his steps, thinking to try the rear door, but was blocked in this quarter by the furious Squires, revolver in hand, his face bleeding from contact with the broken chair.

Behind him came his companion Coney, with a nasty-looking knife in his hand.

He was followed by the angry barkeeper with his club.

Jack's only hope was to reach the stairs and try to out-sprint his pursuers to the roof, if need be.

As he made a jump for them Squires uttered a howl of triumph, raised his revolver and fired.

The ball barely grazed Jack's head, but with the sensation that the house had fallen in upon him he staggered forward, threw up his hands and fell unconscious to the floor of the hallway.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

FIRE!

When Jack came back to his senses he found himself lying on a rude bed in a miserable room.

He was not bound in any way, nor even gagged.

He was not alone, however.

Seated at a table in the middle of the apartment were Bill Squires, Jim Coney and Curtis Jett.

They were playing cards and drinking occasionally.

Jack's face was turned in their direction and he saw them plainly.

"What are you goin' to do with the boy?" asked Jett, dealing the cards around.

"Coney and me will fix him, don't you fear," replied Squires.

"I guess you know how to do the trick if you want to," said Jett, with a short laugh.

"I'll bet we do."

"He's a spunky chap, all right," said Jett. "And strong—why, he fired me over his head as if I was a baby, though it was done by a trick when I was off my guard. I don't see how he laid you and Jim out so neatly, and stopped the barkeep. Seems to be a holy terror when his monkey's up."

"Well, it won't get up any more, not if Jim and me know it," said Squires, darkly.

"Do you mean to hush him for good and all?"

"You'll never find out from us. Jim and me never tell what we do."

"Hold on, that's my trick you took in," said Jett, reach-

ing for the cards. "Don't get so absent-minded. I want all that's comin' to me."

"You'll get all that's comin' to you some day," grinned Squires, sardonically. "Wait till you get up before one of the judges again. You'll get the full limit."

"And what'll you get if you're pinched? They'll have half a dozen or more indictments against you and Jim. When you get up the river you're liable to stay there if somethin' ain't found to send you to the electric chair."

"We ain't pinched yet. Jim and me are goin' West in a day or two, after we get rid of the balance of the stuff he lifted out in Connecticut. You can come with us if you want to."

"I'll come if you'll stand the expense. I haven't a blamed cent."

"You never have anythin'. If you want to come I'll pay your way to Chicago."

"I'm your hairpin. I'd like to get out of town. I've an idea that the cops are beginnin' to take too much interest in me lately, which isn't good for my health. I never was ambitious to get into the limelight. I leave that honor to you and your pard, Jim."

"Talkin' is dry business. Take the can and go down-stairs. It's after one, but I guess you'll find the bar-keeper up yet."

No sooner had Jett left the room with the beer can than Squires got up and dragged a suit-case forward.

"We'll have to let Solomon have this stuff, Jim," he said. "The town is gettin' too hot for us, and we must light out."

"Have it your way, Bill," replied his pal. "The diamonds and such we'll take with us, I reckon."

"Of course. We can do better with them in Chicago than here. Less chance of detection the further we're from the neighborhood where they were lifted. I've got 'em in the bag under the bed. The silver is in this. You'd better take it to Solomon in the mornin' and see what you can raise on it."

"I'll do it."

The two rascals carefully inspected the contents of the bag, Squires taking a note of every piece on a slip of paper, which he put in his pocket.

They had just locked the bag again when Jett reappeared with the can full of foaming lager.

"The bar-room was closed, but I didn't mind that a bit. I've got a key that fits the door. I filled the can from the barrel myself, and got good measure."

"What time is it?" asked Squires.

"About two."

"After you have a fair share of the beer you'd better go. Jim and me have a little job to attend to before we turn in."

"You mean the boy, eh?" asked Jett, nodding at the bed.

"Don't get too inquisitive, Jett. That's your great fault. Never butt into other people's business. It's a bad-practice."

The young man grinned and helped himself to a glass of the lager.

At that moment a sudden racket arose somewhere down-stairs.

"Hello! What's that?" ejaculated Curtis Jett, opening the door and looking out.

The sounds now came up much plainer.

A woman was shrieking and the muffled sound of blows seemed to show what gave rise to her lamentations.

"Hickey has come home drunk again and is beatin' his wife, as usual," remarked Squires. "It's a wonder she doesn't brain him with a poker."

The blows ceased, and the woman's cries stopped, but a moment later the sound of a crash came up.

"He's fallen over a chair or table," chuckled Jett.

He was about to close the door when a fresh racket took place.

The woman who had been shrieking before now started up her toot again.

But it was a different kind of one.

She fled from the room out on the landing yelling "Fire!"

That is the kind of cry that always attracts notice.

The woman might have yelled "murder!" till she grew black in the face, as her husband walloped the life out of her, and no one in that house would have thought of interfering; but the moment she commenced to howl "fire!" everybody within earshot began to sit up and take notice.

In the stillness of the night, in a crowded tenement, the cry carries terror to every soul.

The woman fled shrieking "fire!" down the three flights of stairs, and before two minutes had elapsed the house was in confusion.

Curtis Jett rushed out on the landing and peered down over the railing.

Bill Squires and Jim Coney also woke up to the possible seriousness of the situation and followed him.

All three hung over the rickety balusters and listened.

As the people in the house flocked from their rooms the excitement grew to fever pitch.

"I don't see any fire," said Curtis Jett.

"I smell smoke, though," replied Squires.

"So do I," coincided Coney. "Go down on the next floor, Jett, and see what's wrong."

Jett ran down just in time to see a door flung open and a man come reeling off followed by a cloud of smoke.

The room behind him was all ablaze.

That was enough for Curtis Jett.

He made no attempt to return, but, rushing to the foot of the stairs, yelled up to his friends:

"Say, Bill and Jim, you'd better sneak at once! I'm goin' to turn in an alarm!"

This was merely his excuse to make tracks for the street as quick as he could.

The smoke rolled up toward Squires and Coney, and they decided to get away.

"Come on, Jim," said Squires, hastily. "We'll get the grips and scoot."

"How about the boy?"

"Let him go up with the house, if it goes. It will save us the trouble of hushin' him."

They turned around and made for the door of the room. Then they met with a great surprise.

They found it shut and bolted on the inside.

"What does this mean?" roared Squires, giving the door a kick. "We're shut out!"

"Shut out!" gasped Coney.

"Yes. That boy must have come to his senses and bolted the door against us."

"Smash it in!" gritted Coney. "We must get the grips. The whole of our plunder is in 'em."

Bang! Smash! Bang!

Both the men kicked away at the panels of the door, and while they exerted themselves with desperate earnestness the fire rapidly increased below, and the thick smoke floated upstairs and enveloped them in a dense haze.

## CHAPTER XV.

### JACK TRIES TO SAVE LAWYER DAVENPORT'S PROPERTY.

When Curtis Jett stepped out of the room to investigate the cry of "Fire!" that came up from below, and Bill Squires and Jim Coney followed him, Jack Rand sat up and listened to the growing excitement downstairs.

There were two windows in the room, and both the sashes were thrown up half-way on account of the heat of the night.

Jack slipped over to one and looked out.

He saw a bright glare from the window almost underneath, and puffs of smoke floating out on the night air.

"The house is on fire for fair," he said, excitedly. "It won't do for me to stay here if I can help myself. The question is, how shall I get out? I can't fly, and I can't pass those rascals outside on the landing," he added, with an anxious glance over his shoulder in the direction of the door.

Looking up he saw that the room he was in was at the top of the building, and that a gutter pipe ran along under the eaves close to the top of the window.

"I wonder if I dare trust to that to carry me to the corner of the building?" he asked himself, with a fearful glance at the dark void below where the yard lay. "Anything is better than letting those villains do me up in their own way, which they have been figuring on."

Finally he resolved to venture to try the air-line, for, as we have already seen, he was a boy of good nerve.

Curtis Jett had just run downstairs and the other two men were still leaning over the railing.

Jack tiptoed to the door, closed it softly and shot the heavy bolt.

At that moment his eyes lighted on the suit-case filled with the silver plate stolen from the house of Lawyer Davenport.

There was the other case under the bed, containing the jewels and diamonds.

He rushed to the window again to see where he could throw the suit-cases without smashing them all to pieces.

If he could throw them on to the roof of the house which stood at right angles with the one he was in, and which was a story and a half lower, he might be able to get away with them.

The only way to do that was to get a good swing on them.

At that moment Squires and Coney discovered that they were shut out of the room and commenced to kick furiously on the panels.

Jack paid no attention to them.

He ran to the bed, grabbed a blanket from it, tied one end to the handle of the suit-case containing the jewels, let the bag out of the window and began to swing it to and fro like a pendulum.

While he was doing this the fire rapidly increased below,

the smoke ascending in volumes, partly obscuring Jack's sight.

At the same time Squires and Coney succeeded in smashing in one of the bottom panels.

Coney shoved his arm in and tried to reach the bolt, but it was too far away.

At length the boy got a good swing on the suit-case and let go.

It swept, blanket and all, through the air and landed safely on the roof of the building aimed for.

Outside of the door Squires and his pal were still making the most desperate efforts to get into the room.

They were beating away at an upper panel to get at the bolt, and Jack could not tell what moment they might get in.

He tied the second suit-case to another blanket and started it oscillating as before.

As it was heavier than the other he soon got a good swing on it and let it go.

It landed further over on the roof of the house where the other case stood.

At that moment the upper panel of the door gave way.

Jack saw that the rascals would be in the room in another moment, and what they wouldn't do to him when they laid their hands on him was hardly worth considering.

So he lost no time getting out on the window-sill, reaching up and grabbing at the gutter.

As soon as he got a firm hold he swung off over the dizzy height and began making his way about half a foot at a time along the gutter.

He had hardly left the window before Squires and Coney rushed into the room, now pretty well filled with smoke.

They cared nothing about their late prisoner at that moment.

All they wanted was to secure the suit-cases and make for the street.

Squires dived under the bed and felt around with desperate haste.

Coney ran to the corner where they had shoved the other bag.

They could find neither, and their imprecations were something fierce.

Finally they both had to give up and rush to the windows for air.

"I can't find anythin' under the bed," snarled Squires. "Where in thunder has that case gone?"

"I can't find the other one, either!" howled Coney.

The people saw Squires and Coney at the windows, and they also saw Jack making his perilous trip along the gutter pipe.

"The kid is workin' himself along the gutter!" hissed Squires.

"I see he is," replied Coney.

Then he uttered a terrible imprecation.

"Look yonder on the roof of that house, Bill!" he gritted. "There's our suit-cases with the plunder. The boy must have thrown them there."

"We must follow that kid," said Squires, suiting the action to the word by getting out on the window-sill and reaching for the gutter.

In another moment he swung off and began working his way along the same as Jack was doing.

After some hesitation Coney followed his example, and now the spectators had a sight of three lives depending on the stability of the gutter pipe under the eaves of the burning building.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### WHAT HIS LAST NICKEL DID FOR JACK RAND.

By this time Jack had covered more than half the distance to safety.

All his energies of mind and body were concentrated on the nervous grip that kept him from falling, and carried him along foot by foot towards the waste-pipe at the end of the building, down which he proposed to slide to reach the roof on top of which he had flung the two suit-cases.

At the best, it was a desperate journey for the boy.

In addition to the possibilities of failing muscles, dizziness, and an uncertain grip, was the still more probable contingency of mechanical defects in the structure he trusted to.

A single faulty screw, a single flaw anywhere in the whole length of the gutter, was likely to precipitate him to certain death.

And the perils that faced Jack also confronted Squires and Coney as soon as they started after him.

In fact, their perils were greater, for they were many pounds heavier than the boy, and the iron gutter that bore his weight might yield under theirs.

And this is just what happened.

Barely had Jack reached the corner of the building, and, with an intense feeling of thankfulness, seized the waste-pipe to slide down, than he heard a crash behind.

A section of the gutter had given way under Squires' weight, and with a terrible cry he fell five stories to his death, his body landing on the flagstones of the yard with a thud that smashed every bone in his body.

Coney, coming on behind, as well as the onlookers, were appalled by the accident.

The rascal's further progress was cut off by the destruction of at least two yards of the pipe which had followed Squires in his downward flight.

Coney could only hang shivering in the air, holding on for dear life to the gutter.

For a few moments he hung, like Mahomet's coffin, between the earth and the sky, not knowing what to do to save himself.

Then he recovered his faculties, retraced his way a yard, kicked in the nearest window, swung himself into the room, thick with smoke, and disappeared.

He was never seen again until the firemen found his smothered body in the room after the fire, which destroyed more than half the building, had been put out.

In the meantime, Jack reached the roof where the suit-cases were in safety.

There was a scuttle in the center of it, and his first object was to see if it was open.

The fire was now under great headway in the building he had left.

The street in front was resonant with the clang of the fire-engines, hose-carts, hook-and-ladder trucks, and patrol wagon that had answered the first alarm.

Jack found the scuttle was not secured.

He flung it open, and saw the dim outlines of a ladder underneath.

He disengaged the suit-cases from the blankets and carried them down into the upper floor of the building, where he ran foul of many excited people.

No one paid much attention to him, and he made his way to the street, which was around the corner from the burning building.

His purpose now was to reach his boarding-house with the suit-cases without any unnecessary delay.

It was about half-past two o'clock, and he had never been out so late since he came to New York.

He walked up to Forty-second Street, through a small crowd of people running to the fire.

Turning eastward along that street he hurried forward, with occasional stops for rest, for one of the cases was very heavy, until at length he reached the Ninth Avenue station of the elevated road.

Mounting the stairs of the uptown side he caught a train that was just rolling in, and was soon on his way uptown.

Now that he had time to think he began to feel sick and faint after the terrible experiences he had been through.

At any rate, he looked like a wreck, and the conductor came down to where he sat and looked at him hard.

The blood that had flowed from the wound on his head, made by the bullet fired by Squires in the lower hallway, had dried on his collar, neck and hair, and his face looked ghastly.

The conductor spoke to him, and he told the man a portion of his story, which made his eyes bulge with wonder.

Jack reached his boarding-house at last, and entered without any one being the wiser.

He washed himself, dusted his clothes and then went to bed.

He didn't get up until late, and ate his breakfast by himself.

The morning papers had an account of the fire, but of course Jack's name was not mentioned, as his connection with the place was not known.

He saw that both Squires and Coney were reported dead.

He carried the two suit-cases to the office, and told his story to Mr. Ridge, who heard him almost incredulously.

"You appear to have escaped by the skin of your teeth, Jack," he said.

"That's what I did, sir," replied the boy.

He lost no time notifying Lawyer Davenport by telegraph that he had recovered the bulk of his stolen property, and the lawyer came on to New York to take charge of it, and to learn from Jack how he got possession of it.

Needless to say that Jack's story amazed him.

He showed his appreciation by paying the boy the \$5,000 he had offered the detectives to recover it.

Lawyer Davenport spread the news of Jack's remarkable experiences in connection with the recovery of his property, and the boy became the hero of the hour in Beechwood.

Of course Jack told Flora Sanders all he had gone through, and the girl shuddered at his recital.

Naturally he became a hero in her eyes, too.

Jack continued to work for Mr. Ridge up to the first of September, when he received a letter from his father telling him he must return home for school.

He hated to resign his job, for he had grown to like the

work, and he thought a whole lot of the lawyer, too, but he was not master of his own actions.

He had been calling regularly every Wednesday evening on Flora Sanders, and on the night of his last Wednesday in New York he called as usual.

"This is my last evening call on you for some time to come, Flora," he said.

"Your last!" she exclaimed, with beating heart.

"Yes, I've got to go back home and go to school again."

Then he told her, what he had not done before, how he was the son of Major Rand, of Beechwood, and why he had remained in New York and worked in preference to enjoying his vacation at home.

She was very much astonished, and not a little disturbed at the thought of losing him, for in her estimation no other boy she knew could take Jack's place.

Then he made her feel happy by assuring her that he would come on and see her every other Saturday, as he didn't mean to lose her if he could help himself.

So they parted with that understanding, and Jack kept his promise to the letter.

There was still a surprise in store for Jack in connection with his short career in New York which had made quite a man out of him.

He had framed his 10,000-share certificate of the Echo Valley Gold Mining Co., that he purchased from poor old John Grant that evening at the office, and hung it on the wall of his room without any idea that it ever would amount to anything.

One morning he read in a New York daily that the mine had suddenly come to life.

The report proved to be correct, and the stock was soon quoted on the Western mining exchanges at 25 cents a share.

Eventually it went to \$1.50 a share, and Jack realized a profit of \$15,000.

In fact, Jack laid the whole of his future happiness to that nickel, for it was really through the nickel he became acquainted with Flora Sanders, who in the course of time became his wife, and the mistress of a handsome residence in Beechwood.

He often wished he could recover that nickel and have it framed in diamonds for his wife, but of course that was an impossibility.

However, he never forgot His Last Nickel, and what it did for him.

THE END

Read "NAT NOBLE, THE LITTLE BROKER; OR, THE BOY WHO STARTED A WALL STREET PANIC," which will be the next number (130) of "Fame and Fortune Weekly."

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## GOOD STORIES.

William John Watson emigrated a half century ago from Portadown, County Armagh, to Australia, where he made a fortune of over \$50,000. A few years ago he returned to his native town and has since lived the life of a miser in a small three-roomed house, where he was found dead some time ago. By his will he leaves the whole of his property to Portadown for the purpose of providing healthy recreation for the people, but he bars football or race-rowing. The will further provides that the urban council shall, out of the interest, have a dinner every five years, the expenses not to exceed \$5 per head. At each of these dinners the will is to be read publicly.

"There's a queer and nasty kind of criminal that we call the barber thief," said the detective. "He is a journeyman barber who 'lifts' your scarfpin while shaving you. These rascals have learned somehow or other to shave and hair-cut fairly well. They go everywhere in the rush season—California or Florida in winter, Atlantic City in the summer, and so on—and there the overworked boss barber, with hands scarce, is only too glad to take them on, and to take them on without references. It doesn't take a clever barber thief long to make a good haul. In a day in Saratoga one of these men 'lifted' out of millionaires' and sports' neckties diamonds and pearls to the value of \$4,000."

The recent establishing of the Los Angeles Ostrich Farm within the city limits of Los Angeles gives California four ostrich enterprises—the others being in San Diego, South Pasadena and San José. The South African farms do not manufacture and retail their product, but in California, says Sunset, the feathers are grown, manufactured and retailed by the same concern. The initiative in the ostrich industry was taken about thirty years ago by Dr. Sketchley, who established a farm at Anaheim. Later on other men imported birds and assisted in establishing the business. The greatest development of the business has been in Arizona, where there are at present over 2,000 birds. Their product of feathers has been sold principally to New York manufacturers.

The life of a picture film is limited. They constantly are wound and unwound on the machines, and this in time wears them so full of holes and scratches that they become valueless. Only by the best of care can a string of films be made to last through one season. When the films are rented from the Paris manufacturers it costs the managers in this country all the way from \$10 to \$50 a week to get them. The rental price depends on the quality of the films and the scenes which they portray. In the 5-cent theatres, where there is a change of pictures every day, the same films can be used only two or three times at most. After that they are sent to the next vaudeville or 5-cent theatre in the circuit, thus

going the rounds much after the manner of the actors and actresses themselves.

We shall all be glad if the reported discovery of gold in Scotland should "pan out" into a payable prospect, says the London Chronicle. Wales had a little gold boom a few years ago, originated by Mr. Pritchard Morgan, sometime Liberal M. P. for Merthyr, a Welshman who had spent seventeen years on the Australian goldfields and had a thorough acquaintance with every department of the industry. Mr. Morgan complained bitterly of the obstacles thrown in his way by the laws and officials of this country—difficulties unknown in Australia. It is likely enough that if we had a minister of mines, as in Australia, at the head of a well-equipped department, our mineral resources would be more sympathetically and effectively investigated and developed. Then there is the sister isle. Ireland once produced gold in considerable quantities. Some big nuggets were unearthed in the County Wicklow, and if some enterprising capitalist started afresh in the old workings that may still be seen there he might be richly rewarded for his pains. During recent years old goldfields in Australia, too hastily abandoned in the feverish fifties and sixties of the last century, have been very profitably reworked. The late Mr. Parnell, whose home was in Wicklow, and who took an interest in mining, had at one time a scheme for reviving the gold industry, but nothing practical was done.

## JOKES AND JESTS.

Mrs. Avenoo—You say he detests his wife cordially? Mrs. de Scussit—Yes, he hates the very ground she sued for divorce on.

Visitor—Well, Ethel, are you going to paint pictures like your father when you grow up? Ethel—I should like to, but mother says one artist in the family is quite enough for any poor woman to put up with.

"Don't you suppose," said a member of the police force, "that a policeman knows a rogue when he sees him?" "No doubt," was the reply; "but the trouble is that he does not seize a rogue when he knows him."

At a teachers' conference lately held in Berlin one of the school principals rose to propose the toast "Long live the teachers!" "On what?" inquired a meager, pallid, young assistant instructor, in a hollow voice.

Mr. Hans—Doc, I ain'd got much money. Vill you dake my bill out in drade? Dr. Gans—Why, I might. What's your business? "I'm der leader off der liddle Cherman band. Ve'll blay in front off your house effry efening."

"I've got a little straight," said the man who had called. "What have you got?" "Three affinities and a pair of artists," answered the other, raking in the pot. Later when the man saw three queens and two jacks he realized that he was playing poker with one who reads the papers.

A New Englander recently had occasion to engage a gardener. One morning two applicants appeared—one a decidedly decent looking man, and the other of much less prepossessing appearance and manner. After very little hesitation the man of the house chose the latter applicant. A friend who was present evinced surprise at the selection, asking: "Has that man worked for you before?" "No," replied the other, "in fact, I never saw either of them until to-day." "Then why did you choose the shorter man? The other had a much better face." "Face!" exclaimed the proprietor of the place, in disgust. "Let me tell you that when you pick out a gardener, you want to go by his overalls. If they're patched on the knees you want him. If the patch is on the seat of his trousers, you don't."

## THE TENERLEY CASE

By Alexander Armstrong.

"Here is something stirring for you," my chief said to me when he sent me to investigate the Tenerley case.

My duties had been the reverse of "stirring" for some time, and I was not sorry to be detailed for something spiced with an animating element.

And I was not long in ascertaining that the Tenerley case was all it had foretold to be, and a good deal more besides.

The deceased, Mr. Tenerley, was a retired commission merchant of considerable wealth, and he had lived in a commodious residence in Thirteenth street.

He was rather aged and somewhat feeble; but he had gone to his bed-chamber in his ordinary health on that fatal night.

At the usual breakfast hour he did not appear, and after a little delay a servant went into his room through his always unlocked door, and found him lying lifeless.

He slept in a large apartment with windows almost on a level with the grounds; one of these windows had been broken open; a small safe had been opened and its contents ransacked; and there were indications that the old gentleman had been strangled or suffocated, to prevent his outcries.

When I arrived on the scene of the tragedy the dead man was lying as when first discovered, and nothing about the room had been altered or disturbed.

It needed but a glance to satisfy my experienced eyes that the foul work was not the doing of a professional burglar, and that plunder had not been the motive of the crime.

Firstly, the safe had been unlocked in the regular method, and several thousand dollars in banknotes were untouched in one of the ransacked compartments.

Secondly, the window which fastened by the simplest sort of catch had been broken open from the inside; and, of course, such a procedure could have been only a device—and a glaringly stupid one—to divert suspicion from the rightful track.

His household consisted of a young niece who was the mistress of the house, a young nephew who acted as his private secretary, and two servants of whose guiltlessness there could be no question.

"I infer Miss Felix, the niece, and Mr. De Latto, the nephew, are his heirs," I said to the lawyer who had been Mr. Tenerley's adviser and life-long friend.

"There was a will to that effect, I think," was the answer. "But he contemplated canceling it and dictating another. Indeed, it was by his appointment and for the purpose of drawing up such a document I came here to-day—only to find him like this—poor Tenerley!" he added with emotion.

"Had he confided to you the disposition he intended making of his property—and was any other person aware of his intentions?" I inquired.

It had occurred to me that there might be some person who would have desired to prevent the canceling of the old will and the making of a new.

"Well, yes," the lawyer replied, candidly. "Poor Tenerley was never reticent about his affairs. We all knew Miss Felix was to have the larger bulk of his property; but it was his wish for her to become the wife of his nephew, who is ardently attached to her."

"And she had attached her own affections elsewhere, perhaps," I remarked at random.

"She had a girlish fancy at one time, I believe, for Wallace Irving—a young man of excellent birth and education, who acted as private secretary to my friend until Mr. De Latto chose to undertake the responsibility. But she would have yielded to her uncle's wishes eventually, I think; she would have realized the folly of her preference for a lover who was held in disfavor."

"So there was enmity between Mr. Irving and your deceased friend?" said I.

"I hope you do not regard the servants' gossip as of any importance," the lawyer said, dissentingly. "There were hard words—even threatening words between them, perhaps; but

so there were between Miss Felix and her uncle. It was only a little domestic unpleasantness, of no consequence in the case whatever. I hope you do not purpose dragging the members of the family into your investigations of a crime which was undoubtedly perpetrated by some prowling vagrant."

"I should regret any necessity of doing so," I said laconically.

But that Mr. Tenerley had met his death at the hands of some one familiar with the house I was convinced.

And I thought I had the whole case in a nutshell.

Some person had determined to possess himself of something kept in the safe; he had secreted himself in the house, and perhaps in the room. After the old gentleman had fallen asleep he had taken the bunch of keys Mr. Tenerley always placed at night, with watch and wallet, beneath a pillow of the bed.

He had unlocked the safe and secured the article—whatever it was—he wanted.

But at the moment Mr. Tenerley had awakened. Startled, fearing recognition, or perhaps already recognized, the nocturnal marauder had sprung upon the helpless victim, clutched him by the throat, and smothered his outcries by the heavy pillow.

Then, while the old gentleman had ceased to struggle, the assailant had fled through the broken window. In his flight he had dropped a glove upon the sod beneath the casement, and that glove I deemed no trivial clew.

It was of pale yellow kid, stitched down the back in black ribbing, and it had certainly fitted the hand of somebody other than a prowling vagrant.

My suspicion was directing itself against Wallace Irving; and yet I could not help believing the will was the article for which the contents of the safe had been ransacked. And I could not understand how his interests could be affected by either the old will or the new one.

My investigations had consumed the greater part of the afternoon, and it was nearly dark when I left the house.

There was a short cut through the grounds to the "L" station, and after a moment of deliberation I concluded to take the shorter path, rough as it was and leading, as it did, across a disagreeably located common.

I had reached the edge of the grounds, and was passing a clump of outlying shrubbery, when I heard a suppressed groan; and as I stopped I saw the figure of a man, dark and distinct, against the light of the early moon just then rising.

He was sitting on a fragment of timber, his head bowed upon his hands, his attitude that of misery, abject and agonizing.

I think I have said that a detective is often guided by his instincts; anyhow, it was instinct which impelled me just then.

I drew from an inner pocket the glove I had picked up beneath the broken window, and, advancing, I extended it toward him.

"Is not this yours?" said I.

"Yes, it is mine," said he, lifting his head and mechanically putting out a hand to take it.

But I drew it back.

"Can you explain how it came beneath the window of the old gentleman who was murdered last night?" I demanded abruptly.

"Yes, I can if I choose," he admitted, wearily rather than defiantly.

I gazed at him for a moment in silence.

"You are Wallace Irving. I am convinced you know something of this crime. I am afraid I shall have to take you in custody," I said, at a venture.

With a movement which was more of dignity than of fear he readily arose to his feet.

"I am prepared to go with you," he said, slowly. "I shall not attempt to refute any charge which may be brought against me."

His stoical manner and the bitter despair of his voice amazed me.

All at once it struck me that this man was as innocent as myself, that he had sealed his lips to shield another, and that

he would maintain his stubborn reticence to the end, even if he should go to the electric chair by so doing.

And it struck me, too, the person for whom he would be most likely to sacrifice reputation and perhaps life could only be the woman he loved, and that woman was Mattie Felix.

"If I could only bring the two face to face unexpectedly, an unguarded word from either of them might explain the enigma and put me on the track of the criminal," I pondered.

A detective is not usually deficient in the way of manufacturing expedients, and I was not long in projecting how I should effect a meeting between the two.

That night I had Wallace Irving detained in the prison as an important witness in the Tenerley case; and the next morning I presented myself at the house in Thirteenth street.

A servant ushered me into a cozy sitting-room of which both Miss Felix and her cousin happened at the moment to be occupants.

"I trust I am not exceeding the strict demands of duty," I began boldly to Mr. De Latto. "But if Miss Felix and yourself can spare me an hour or two you will be furthering the ends of justice. I took into custody last night an individual whom I detected loitering just outside the grounds. I am satisfied he is connected with this melancholy affair; and if you will come with me, perhaps you may be able to identify him."

Mr. De Latto looked rather surprised, and his cousin indifferent; but neither seemed to regard such a measure as extraordinary.

And so it happened that an hour later Miss Felix, her cousin and myself were admitted into a corridor of the prison where Wallace Irving was detained.

I whispered a word of instruction to the officer in charge, and then seated myself where I could best witness the meeting I had arranged.

Miss Felix preferred to remain standing; she still maintained her look of indifference; but there was something in the changing curves of her coral mouth and in the smouldering flame of her large, black eyes which belied her passive calm.

De Latto hovered near her, and his air impressed me as being singularly forced and uneasy.

Presently a spiritless tread echoed upon the stone floor of an intersecting corridor.

At the sound Miss Felix turned and confronted the young prisoner, who had halted behind the double grating.

Each looked straight into the eyes of the other. Reproach, aversion and the agony of despairing love were upon the faces of both.

"Oh, Wallie, how could you do anything so desperate—so dastardly?" was the girl's impetuous, wailing cry.

"Well, Mattie, have you come to see how bravely I have shouldered your sin?" was the young man's scornful, simultaneous interrogation.

And then followed a prison scene, never, perhaps, equaled in prison annals.

Instantly both became mindful that they were not alone, that other eyes were watching them, that other ears were listening for what their incautious lips might reveal.

And instantly the look and attitude of each changed. The young man seemed struggling with himself; Miss Felix seemed to have decided upon a startling course of action.

With her beautiful head erect, with a face as white as death, she turned to me.

"Wallace Irving shall shoulder my sin no longer!" came with deliberate distinctness from her bloodless lips. "He is innocent. I alone am guilty of my uncle's death. Let him go free. I am ready to be confined in his place."

"Mattie, Mattie, you are mad!" the prisoner called, in an agonized voice, through the iron bars. "The crime can be proved mine. You heard me quarreling with your uncle on that fatal night; you saw me hurrying through the trees in the midnight. The glove picked up beneath the window is witness against me. Would you sacrifice yourself to save me?"

"You were in the grounds, perhaps watching for the sight of one for whom you cared," Miss Felix said, in a strange voice; "and through the window you saw me in the room of

death. You heard what was said by my uncle and by me. You did not witness the end. You did not behold the consummation of the deed, but you believe it was accomplished by me. And your lips shall not be sealed to shield me, Wallace Irving."

I had arisen from my seat. To say that I was excited would be but to feebly portray the bewildering sensations I experienced.

De Latto came toward me. There was an indefinable expression of consternation on his none too agreeable countenance, and he gazed almost imploringly toward me.

"She is raving; she has become a maniac; we must get her away," he said.

He took a step toward her and put an arm persuasively about her waist.

"Cousin Mattie," he began entreatingly.

But she only flung back her head with a gesture of passionate resentment and violently wrenched herself from his restraining clasp.

As she did so De Latto uttered some incoherent ejaculation and started backward, with one hand pressed to his throat, which was reddened with swiftly trickling blood.

"What is it? Are you hurt?" I asked as I went to him.

He tried to speak, but his words were choked in a curious gurgle, and his features had become of an ashen-purple hue.

In an instant more I saw what had happened.

The pretty hat Miss Felix wore had been fastened by an ornamental pin, abnormally long, and sharp almost as a surgeon's lance.

As she flung back her head and wrenched herself from his embracing arm the point had penetrated and gashed deeply into the veins of his throat, and the seemingly trivial accident was more serious than might be supposed.

"We must have a doctor before I drive you home," said I.

But he only shook his head and turned impatiently to descend to the carriage.

Miss Felix, with one last, long look at the prisoner, followed her cousin away, and we immediately drove back to the Tenerley residence.

The drive was a silent one. After her extraordinary declaration Miss Felix had relapsed into a tragic reserve; and her cousin was becoming more and more incapable of speech.

"This hurt is not as slight as he thinks," I said to myself as I anxiously watched him totter from the carriage and make his way weakly into the house. "He ought to look out for himself; for even so trivial a wound may prove fatal."

And such it proved in fact.

Sometime the next day I was again summoned to the fatal house. Watson De Latto was dying, and he had made a written confession which he wished to submit to me.

For, despite the contradictory declarations of the lovers in that memorable prison scene, the nephew was the real criminal.

He had determined to possess himself of the first will; he believed if the second one should be less favorable for his prospects he could at some future time effect a substitution of the one for the other. At least he thought the experiment would be worth trying.

In the midst of his examination of the safe, the old gentleman had awakened; and, maddened with terror lest he should be recognized, he had committed his unpremeditated crime of murder.

"And I should not have prevented the guilt being fixed upon young Irving; for I knew how my cousin loved him, and the thought of her becoming his wife frenzied me," were the last words of his pitiable confession.

Of course the prison scene had explained already the prior conduct of the lovers. Each had believed the other guilty, and each would have borne any punishment or disgrace rather than betray the other.

But love can pardon even suspicion as cruel and unjust as theirs had been, and they were very happily married a year or so after the remarkable events just related.

And I was rewarded with a check for a handsome amount in payment for my services in settling the mystery of the queer Tenerley case.

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